

WILD WEST WEEKLY

A MAGAZINE CONTAINING STORIES, SKETCHES ETC. OF WESTERN LIFE.

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YOUNG WILD WEST AND "SILVER STREAM"; OR, THE WHITE GIRL CAPTIVE OF THE SIOUX.

By AN OLD SCOUT.



As Wild felled one of the redskins by a blow from the butt of his revolver, and sprang for the one with the tomahawk, the chief's daughter suddenly appeared. Raising her hands, she exclaimed: "Go back, Young Wild West. I will save her!"

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YOUNG WILD WEST AND "SILVER STREAM"

OR,

The White Girl Captive of the Sioux

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CHAPTER I.

YOUNG WILD WEST AND HIS FRIENDS ARRIVE AT CHEYENNE.

It was shortly after the hour of 11 o'clock, on a cold morning in late fall, when Young Wild West and his traveling friends arrived at Cheyenne, Wyoming.

The time was a few years ago, when Cheyenne was nothing like the "big town" it now is, and cowboys and desperadoes sometimes had "high old times" there.

Young Wild West, the well-known boy-hero of the Wild West, had come up from Santa Fe by rail, as it was a hurry call that he was answering.

His two partners, Cheyenne Charlie, the ex-Government scout, and Jim Dart, a boy about his own age, always traveled with him on his adventurous trips, and very often the wife of Cheyenne Charlie and the girl-sweethearts of the boys went along, too.

The girls, as they always spoke of them, though the scout's wife must have been something well over twenty, were with them on this trip, as were the two Chinese servants they hired to cook and help out in the care of their horses, etc.

Attired in a neat-fitting suit of buckskin, trimmed elaborately with red silk fringe, his broad sombrero tipped back over a wealth of long, light chestnut hair, the handsome, young hero made an imposing, not to say, dashing and picturesque, appearance.

Known far and near as the Champion Deadshot of the West, and sometimes called the Prince of the Saddle by his admiring friends, the boy was certainly a prominent figure at the time of which we write.

His partners loved him as though he had been a

brother, and they were ready to stick to him through thick and thin, always relying on his wonderful coolness and excellent judgment.

The fact that Young Wild West had helped out the railroads by running down train wreckers and robbers at various times made it possible for him to get favors from them, and he had managed to have the car containing their horses to be attached to the regular train.

Thus when our friends arrived at Cheyenne, which was their destination, as far as railroading was concerned, they had their horses right there with them.

There were quite a few men gathered on the platform of the station as our friends stepped from the train, and though there were probably twenty passengers to alight Young Wild West and his friends attracted the most attention.

With his charming, golden-haired sweetheart, Arietta Murdock, walking at his side, our hero led the way for the hotel that was but a minute's walk from the platform.

Behind him came Cheyenne Charlie and Anna, his wife, and following them closely were Jim Dart and Eloise Gardner, his sweetheart.

The girls were not much over sixteen, but the outdoor life they led the most of the time had made them robust and healthy, and they would have been taken to be a little older than they were.

Hop and Wing, the Chinese servants, brought up the rear, each with a traveling bag.

As they appeared some of the cowboys gathered about began jeering them.

But the Celestials paid not the least attention to them.

It was just when Young Wild West and Arietta ascended the single step that led to the porch of the hotel that half a dozen men came riding around the adjacent corner, yelling and firing off their revolvers.

They were undoubtedly cowboys, who had come in

from some neighboring ranch, and having got just about enough tanglefoot aboard, they were in for a lively time.

One of them was swinging a lariat, and as he caught sight of the two Chinamen at the tail end of the procession he shouted:

"Wow! Look here, boys! Travelin' heathen, by thunder! Watch me rope 'em!"

He let his lariat go the very next instant, and as it zigzagged through the air the loop spread out directly over the heads of Hop and Wing.

It was only natural that they should dodge, as well as those near them, but it was too late!

The cowboy, though he was under the influence of liquor, knew how to handle a lariat to perfection, and down came the rope, catching both the Celestials.

A quick jerk and they were rolling in the dust, the traveling bags flying from them in different directions.

"Hip hi!" yelled the Chinamen, as if in once voice, and then they went rolling in the dust.

The cowboy kept his horse going and was dragging them along when Young Wild West turned as quick as a flash and whipped out a revolver.

Crack!

As the sharp report rang out the lariat was severed as clean as a whistle.

The young deadshot had fired at close range, for the rope was not more than ten feet from him when he pulled the trigger.

Still it was a remarkable shot, for a rope does not make a very big target.

The cowboy swung his horse around and came galloping back, looking amazed.

His companions had already halted by this time, and they, too, were looking at Young Wild West.

The Chinamen were up and gathering up the bags in a jiffy, acting as though they were not afraid of being harmed any further.

"Who done that? Who fired that gun?" roared the cowboy, as he halted within a few feet of the hotel porch and looked squarely at our hero.

"I did!" was the calm rejoinder. "Don't get excited over it, my friend. I thought you were going a little too fast, and as I didn't want the two Chinamen to be killed I just stopped your game, that's all. I reckon it's all right."

"You shot that rope in two, eh?"

"Yes, that is about the size of it."

The cowboy quickly dismounted.

Then he pulled in the rope until he got to the end, where the bullet had cut the strands.

"Yes!" he said, shaking his head in a puzzled way, "I reckon a bullet done that. But see here, young feller! I don't like this fur a cent! That was a brand new rope."

"Well, I can't help that. You shouldn't rope people as they are crossing the street, and minding their own business."

"People! Why, them is only heathens."

"That's all right. But they were minding their own business, though."

"If ther young galoot sticks up fur ther heathens jest touch him up, Tom!" called out one of the cowboy's followers.

"I reckon that's jest what'll be ther case," was the

reply. "Young feller, you're a mighty good shot, I will say. But you've got ter pay fur my rope. Do yer hear that? I ain't in ther habit of usin' a rope with a splice in it, an' I ain't in ther habit of buyin' a new one every day, either. Come down with ther dough now, or there'll be trouble!"

"Oh, I reckon there won't be very much trouble about it," Wild answered, coolly, his companions looking on with great interest.

None of them seemed a bit alarmed, either; on the contrary, the faces of Cheyenne Charlie and Jim Dart wore broad smiles.

There were five in the bunch of cowboys, and they all dismounted.

By this time a crowd had collected, some coming out of the hotel and others from the depot and other parts of the vicinity.

Young Wild West stood on the little patch of sidewalk in front of the hotel, as cool as an iceberg.

The dashing young deadshot never looked for trouble, but when it came he was always there and ready to put an end to it.

"I'm ther boss cowpuncher of ther Cross Line Ranch, an' I never let any galoot make a fool of me!" roared the man, who was now getting very angry. "Are you goin' ter pay fur that rope, young feller?"

"No!"

The reply rang out decisively, and those who heard it could but feel that the boy meant what he said.

Then look out fur yourself! I'm goin' ter take ther price of it out of your hide!"

The cowboy leaped forward to grab Wild by the collar, but he made a bad miss of it.

Biff!

He received a blow on the breast that sent him staggering, and a combined cry of surprise went up from his friends and some of the other lookers-on.

"When you think you have got enough to settle your claim against me, just let me know," said the dashing boy, coolly, as he stood before the angered cowboy. "I might as well tell you, though, that you can't whip me. You can't do it, because I won't let you!"

"I can't, eh? Then I'll put a chunk of lead in yer!"

As he made that threat a revolver flashed in his hand.

But as quick as a wink our hero drew a six-shooter from his belt and fired.

The cowboy's revolver dropped to the ground, and he danced around shaking his hand as though he was trying to get rid of it.

But he had not been hurt a particle, for the bullet had simply hit the cylinder of his weapon and knocked it from his hand.

Young Wild West knew it was a risky shot he was taking, but the crowd seemed to know that it was not a good thing to stand behind either of them, when both were armed.

But having practiced quick shooting so much, he could hardly miss, and when the boy saw the weapon drop he knew that he had put the bullet just where he wanted to.

"You can't whip me, and you can't shoot me," said our

hero, smiling at the cowboy. "Now what are you going to do about it?"

"Nothin'!" was the quick reply. "It's all off, young feller. I don't want nothin' ter do with a feller what kin shoot like you kin. Never mind payin' fur ther rope. I reckon I ain't hurt much, an' I ain't goin' ter be. Come on, boys! We'll go in an' liquor up."

Then he looked at his revolver on the ground, and then at his conqueror.

"Pick it up," said Wild. "But you had better look it over before you try to shoot again. There may be some lead wedged in somewhere, and it might not work."

He picked it up and looked it over.

"I reckon she's all right," he said. "I see where yer plipped her when yer shot. That was somethin', that was! I'm mighty glad yer didn't try ter hit me, instead of ther gun."

Dropping the weapon into the holster that hung from his belt, he led the way to the barroom of the hotel.

His companions seemed to be perfectly satisfied at the way it had turned out, and they went in rather quietly.

"Now I reckon we'll go in and have something to eat, and then we'll get the horses out of the box car," said our hero, calmly, as he addressed his companions.

"Hooray fur Young Wild West, ther Champion Deadshot!" yelled a man on the porch. "Boys, I thought it was him when I first sot eyes on him; but now I know it is. Give him a cheer, boys! Hooray! Hooray!"

The crowd joined in, and, waving his hand to them, Wild took Arietta by the arm and went inside the hotel.

"That's a little more than I expected here in Cheyenne," he said. "I thought things had tamed down a little here in town, since it got so big. But bad men and bullying cowboys are bound to make themselves heard, no matter where they are. I reckon that galoot won't lasso any more Chinamen very soon. He'll think about what happened to him every time he looks at his rope, too."

"Well, I am glad he got satisfied so easily, Wild," Arietta spoke up. "The truth is I am very hungry, and if it had lasted much longer I would have been tempted to take a hand in it myself."

"Well, they all had sense enough to let well enough alone, I reckon, Et. Now for something to eat."

CHAPTER II.

POKER JACK SHOWS UP.

It was not yet noon, but so near to it that the landlord of the hotel was easily persuaded to hurry up the dinner for the party.

They had a table all to themselves, too, for our hero and his two partners had more of an income than they could spend traveling about the country.

The income came from the interests in gold and silver mines they possessed, not to speak of the mines Young Wild West owned outright.

The boy had been very lucky when he first started out to make a name for himself, and, though he had lost

heavily at different times, his lands and holdings were bound to keep him as long as he lived.

The mission the young deadshot was on as we find him at Cheyenne was rather a peculiar one.

He had received a hurry-up call from Fort Fetterman to come up and assist in the search for a white girl captive a villainous band of Sioux Indians had in their clutches.

There being no way to get to the fort by rail at that time, it became necessary for them to journey from Cheyenne on horseback.

But it was only a two days' ride, and none of them minded that, so used to the saddle were they.

Our hero meant to strike out as soon after dinner as possible, providing their horses were found to be all right.

The dinner was served and paid for, and then, leaving the girls at the hotel, Wild and his two partners, accompanied by the Chinese servants, went over to the car and got their horses out.

The animals were found to be in first-class shape, and glad to get out of their prison, as might be supposed.

Our hero's mount was a splendid sorrel stallion, which he had named Spitfire, and the speed and endurance of the animal was really marvelous.

Charlie and Jim possessed horses that were as good as money could buy, and so did the girls.

Arietta's was a fine cream-colored mustang, bearing the name of Snow Flake, for when it was a colt it had been of a snow-white color.

The rest of the mustangs were either black or bays, save the one ridden by Hop Wah, which was a piebald.

Two pack horses always went with them to carry their supplies and camping outfit, and the Chinamen always led them when on the trail.

The work of getting ready to leave Cheyenne was pushed rapidly, and when a few purchases had been made at one of the stores our friends were ready to go.

As Young Wild West and his partners rode around to the front of the hotel to get the girls there was a big crowd assembled there, and among them were the cowboys, who had ridden up in such a hilarious way right after their arrival in town.

The fellow who had been handled so easily by the dashing young deadshot had got up more "steam," but he was not in anything like an ugly mood, and, pulling off his hat, he led in a cheer for Young Wild West and his friends.

It was not yet two o'clock when they left the town, and, taking the road to the north, they soon left Cheyenne behind them.

"Now for business," said Young Wild West. "Girls, you may have a lively time of it before this trip is over. If we can get to the fort without running across any of the Sioux who are on the warpath everything will be all right. But if they happen to be between here and the fort there may be more than one girl captive of the Sioux."

"Not without some of the redskins go under first," retorted Arietta, who could take her own part, when it came to fighting. "We will take the chances, however, the same as we have often done before. We never know

just when we are going to meet a gang of bad Indians, and white renegades and outlaws are so plentiful that we are always busy looking out for them."

"Well, we always manage to take care of ourselves, anyhow. So don't think that we won't be able to this time," Jim Dart spoke up.

"No one is thinkin' that way, Jim," the scout put in. "I reckon that would be a putty way ter think."

"That's right, Charlie," and Young Wild West smiled at the way his partner spoke.

The further they got from Cheyenne, the wilder the aspect of the country became, and soon they were following a wagon trail, which probably led to the different ranches that were located up that way.

But our hero had been over the same route before, and he was not "going it blind," by any means.

The afternoon wore on, the horses traveling at a good clip, for the pack horses were not loaded so heavily but that they could keep up pretty well.

It was sunset when they camped on the bank of a little creek, in a piece of timber, after having passed two ranches, which they had noticed in the distance.

"I hope it don't snow afore we git done with this job," Cheyenne Charlie remarked, as he looked at the sun, which was just going below a distant peak. "Yer never kin tell jest when ther flakes is goin' ter fly this time of year up here. I reckon we'll be glad when we kin head back fur Arizona. A winter in Wyomin' ain't jest ther proper thing, not when yer kin do better."

"You've got that just right, Charlie," our hero answered. "But we have got to stick to our reputation and help out those who want it. Just think of a white girl being in the power of a lot of rascally Sioux! We have got to get her away from them before it is too late."

"Well, 'cordin' ter ther message yer got, she is bein' held fur ther purpose of makin' ther Government come ter terms, Wild. That means that she won't be harmed. This here big chief they call Spotted Wolf is a putty smart redskin, an' he knows that it will be all up with him if ther cavalry catches him. He wants ter make his own terms afore he gives up ther gal he has run off with."

"That's right. But he will give her up without making terms, I reckon. That's what we have come up here for, anyhow."

"It seems strange that forty redskins could make so much trouble, too," spoke up Jim Dart. "It must be that they are a pretty clever lot and know the ground well or they could never keep from being caught."

"No one knows the lay of the land up this way like them, Jim. The cavalry from the fort don't catch them simply because they don't look for them hard enough. Scouting around and finding places where they have been isn't getting much ahead. It was a pretty long message that we got, and it explains the case pretty well to me, for I always do a little reading between the lines."

The two tents were soon put up, for Wild and his partners turned to and helped the Chinamen.

Then wood was gathered and a fire was started not far from the edge of the shallow little creek.

As the blaze grew it spread out a grateful warmth, for there was a chill on the air that cut not a little.

"We haven't seen a thing in the line of game so far,"

said Wild. "But I reckon we'll strike something to-morrow, all right. It will be ham and eggs for supper, Wing."

"Allee light, Misler Wild," answered the cook. "Me makee velly muchee quicke, so be."

Wing was one of the innocent sort of Chinese, who work faithfully, and are to be depended upon. He did not know half as much as his brother Hop, but probably he was all the better for it.

Hop, though really the more innocent-looking of the two, was a very clever Celestial.

He had no equal as a card sharp, and, being a pretty good sleight-of-hand performer, he was able to mystify the majority of those he came in contact with by his wonderful tricks.

He was also a practical joker, and he liked whisky, which he called tanglefoot, more than he should have.

By his cleverness he had succeeded in saving different members of the party several times, when they were in the power of savage Indians and villainous bandits and outlaws.

It was for this reason that Hop had become a fixture of the party, and no matter what his faults might be, his good qualities more than offset them.

Hop attended to the horses and got them all right, and then he came back and watched his brother prepare the evening meal.

The sun disappeared from view, giving promise of a clear day on the morrow, and our friends ate the meal, relishing it greatly, for it was a relief to them to be off the cars and breathing the pure air of the mountains and plains once more.

However, they had not been penned up very long, and they soon forgot about it.

After the meal had been eaten and cleared away Hop and the cook proceeded to cut up enough wood to keep the fire burning over night.

This had just about been accomplished when the clatter of a horse's hoofs sounded near at hand.

"Some one is comin', I reckon," remarked the scout, as he loosened his revolvers in the holsters. "We don't know who it is, so we be ready fur him."

"That's right, Charlie," answered Wild. "But I reckon it isn't an enemy."

A few seconds later a horseman rode up to the camp.

By his makeup, as he halted within the light of the brightly burning fire, our friends could easily tell that he was a cowboy.

He was a young man, too, and rather handsome, though his face seemed drawn, as if from worry, just then.

"Good evenin', strangers," he called out, as he dismounted. "I hope I ain't intrudin'. I've follered yer from Cheyenne, where I got too late ter see yer this afternoon. My name is Jack Hayes—Poker Jack, they call me—an' ther little gal what ther redskins has got is my sweetheart. I heard that Young Wild West was comin', with his pards, ter help find her, so I rode down ter Cheyenne ter meet yer."

CHAPTER III.

HOP IS TAUGHT (?) SOMETHING ABOUT POKER.

"We are mighty glad to meet you, Jack Hayes," said Young Wild West, putting out his hand to the cowboy, for

he had sized him up quickly, and his conclusion was that the young man was telling nothing but the truth.

"Thank yer, Young Wild West," answered Poker Jack. "I never seen yer afore, but I knowed yer ther minute I set eyes on yer. Say, I'm awful glad yer come. I've been tryin' my best ter git Susie Morse away from ther Sioux fur more'n a month now. I've been caught by ther redskins once, an' come mighty near havin' my hair lifted. Old Spotted Wolf is a bad Injun, an' there ain't no mistake about that. It he don't git some kind of a settlement afore another week he's goin' ter make ther gal his squaw, so he threatens. Ther soldiers is all right ter clean out ther Injuns when they see 'em; but ther trouble is that they don't want ter look fur 'em very bad. That's ther whole thing about it. It's through Leftenant Hayes, my brother, up at ther fort, that you was sent fur. All ther generals an' colonels knows you, Young Wild West, an' when they want some one ter find out somethin' that none of their scouts kin quite do they always sends fur Young Wild West an' his pards."

"Well, I am glad they sent for us. It just happened that we were in Santa Fe, and the letter struck us the first thing. Now, you just sit down and have a bite to eat, and then you can tell us all about this case."

Though the cook had cleaned up the remnants of the supper and had washed the tin plates, cups and knives, he did not object in the least when he was told to prepare something for the cowboy.

Poker Jack washed the dust from him, and then, while the meal was being prepared, he went on to say:

"I'm ther foreman of ther cowboys over at ther Cross Line Ranch, an' I've got time off ter hunt up my sweetheart. A feller named Tom has took my place, an' a mighty good one he is, if he wasn't sich a bluffer when he gits out."

"I reckon we met Tom just before noon to-day," said Wild, with a smile, as he remembered that the cowboy who had roped the Chinamen declared that he was the boss cowpuncher of the Cross Line Ranch.

"You met him? Well, I s'pose there's nothin' funny in that, though. It was pay day yisterday, an' ther boys sometimes goes as fur as Cheyenne ter liquor up an' have a good time. I s'pose it was there that yer met him?"

"Yes, that's right."

"Did he say anything about ther white gal captive of ther Sioux?"

"No, I reckon he didn't have time. You see, Tom, as you call him, undertook to muss up our two Chinamen considerably, and I took him to task for it. We had a little tussle and he got the worst of it. Then he got mad and wanted to shoot me. I didn't want that he should, of course, so I knocked the gun out of his hand with a bullet. That settled the whole thing, and I didn't see him again until just as we were leaving the hotel we got dinner at. He gave us a cheer as we rode off, which showed that he bore me no particular grudge."

"Oh, Tom ain't ther one ter bear a grudge ag'in nobody. I'm glad he met a little more than his match, though. He's a sort of bully, yer know."

"He met a big lot more'n his match, I reckon," spoke up Cheyenne Charlie. "He never had a chance, from

ther start ter ther finish. Ther galoot was as easy ter Wild as though he'd been a ten-year-old boy."

"I reckon he didn't know who he'd bucked up ag'in," and the cowboy smiled.

But he grew serious again and related how Susie Morse, the White Girl Captive of the Sioux, had been stolen from a ranch that was located about fifty miles north of Cheyenne, by Spotted Wolf and about forty of the worst redskins that had broken away from the reservation.

Over a month had passed since this had happened, and though they had received messages from the old chief, in which he dictated terms, no one had been able to catch him or to save the girl.

She had been allowed to write letters, which had been delivered in mysterious ways to her father and also to the commander at the fort.

Poker Jack had got upon the trail of the redskins and had been captured by them through a ruse, and it was only through good luck that he had made his escape.

This was about the way the situation was, so there was not a great deal for our hero to learn about it.

But he was a little astonished to think that the band of Sioux were operating so close to Cheyenne.

However, it only pleased him all the more, for he was anxious to get through with the job and return to Santa Fe, and then go on to Phoenix, where he had some mining business to attend to.

"I've been doin' a lot of worryin' about Susie," said the cowboy, turning to the girls. "She's a mighty fine gal, she is. I know you'd like her. We're goin' ter be married as soon as this thing gits over with—if it ever does turn out all right."

"I reckon it'll turn out all right," Wild answered. "You just take us to the hunting grounds of the Sioux, and we won't be long in doing the rest. I'll guarantee you on that. There's nothing like a little luck and a whole lot of persistence, you know."

"An' ther ability ter do things, as I've heard about yer," added Poker Jack.

He ate his supper, and then, as he lighted his pipe, Jim Dart asked him how he came to get the nickname he bore.

"Oh, that's because I used ter waste ther most of my money playin' poker," he answered, smiling at the boy. "Jest as I learned ter be a good one at ther game I give it up. Yer see, I was savin' up ter git married this fall, an' I wanted all ther money I could git. Ther owner of ther Cross Line Ranch is a widower, and he allowed that he could bring Susie over an' live there. She could run ther house, while I run things outside fur him. It was a mighty good idea, but old Spotted Wolf sorter changed it. I don't know why it was that he had ter pick out my gal ter make a captive. They do say that she is ther puttiest gal north of Cheyenne, though, an' that might be ther reason."

"You plaw dlaw pokee, allee samee?" queried Hop, who had been listening to all that was said.

"Yes, I reckon I understand ther game about as well as ther next galoot what comes along," was the reply. "What do you want to know fur? A heathen Chineese ain't s'posed ter play poker, as I knows of. They generally play some kind of an outlandish game what no one kin

tell head or tail about. An' they don't play fur nothin' more than quarters or half dollars."

"Me play dlaw pokee for hundled dollee, allee same," Hop declared, smiling blandly.

Poker Jack grinned.

"Have yer got a deck?" he asked. "It will sorter take ther worry off my mind ter show yer a few things that yer don't know about ther cards, Mister Heathen."

"Allee light!" and Hop produced a brand new deck in a jiffy.

"Yer must be one of ther kind of galoots what goes around lookin' fur games, I reckon," the cowboy remarked, as he proceeded to shuffle the cards. "Jest watch me rip 'em now! That's ther way ter split up ther aces; an' this is ther way to put 'em together. Now, you jest cut ther cards."

He laid them down on an overturned pail, and Hop smilingly cut them.

Our friends knew that the cowboy would have to be a very clever one, indeed, if he could show the Celestial anything, for what Hop did not know about a deck of cards was hardly worth while studying.

"I'll deal out fur a five-handed game now," said the cowboy. "Mr. West, you an' your pards take hands an' draw, jest fur ther fun of it."

"All right," was the reply. "I want to see Hop learn something about poker. He is always at it whenever he can get the chance."

They all got around the overturned pail and received their cards.

Hop was on the right of the dealer, so he would be the last man to draw.

He had taken pretty good note that the cowboy had put certain cards together while he was handling them, and when he had ripped them he had not separated them, as he said he did.

So he was not surprised to find that he had four queens cold.

Wild, Charlie and Jim each called for three cards, and Poker Jack smiled complacently as he gave them to them.

"You want one card, I s'pose?" he said, looking at Hop.

The Chinaman shook his head.

"Me takee fivee, so be," he replied.

"What!" gasped the dealer.

"Lat light; me wantee whole bookee, so be; me takee allee samee fivee cards. You show poor Chinee how play um dlaw pokee, and me wantee knowee velly muchee."

The cowboy smiled in a sickly way.

"Well, if you want five I'll give them to yer," he answered.

Then he undertook to deal them from the bottom of the pack, and, though he was pretty slick at it, Hop touched him on the arm and exclaimed:

"Stoppee lat! Me wantee no cheatee, so be."

Poker Jack laughed it off and then gave him the five top cards.

As Hop had figured, the four aces were there.

"Lat velly nicee gamee," he said, blandly. "You showee poor Chinee how to allee samee gittee velly nicee hand."

"I reckon you don't need no showin'," was the quick

retort. "I'm done. When I find a feller better with ther cards than I am I always gives in."

"Well, I reckon Hop does know something about a pack of cards," our hero said, with a smile. "The fact is, I have never yet seen quite his match."

"Ther drinks is on me, I reckon," and the cowboy shook his head.

CHAPTER IV.

REDSKINS!

The night passed quietly enough, and when morning came Young Wild West and his friends were up with the sun.

Poker Jack declared that he had slept but little, as his mind was on his sweetheart, who was in the hands of the villainous band of Sioux.

"Keep a stiff upper lip, Jack," said Wild. "I reckon we'll have her before very many days. If the redskins are as near as you say they are I'll make it forty-eight hours, and no longer."

The eyes of the cowboy brightened.

"I only hope you're right, Young Wild West," he answered. "It's a putty hard fix she's in. But one thing about Susie is that she's got nerve enough ter stand it. She ain't none of ther kind of gals what faints at ther sight of a little snake."

"She is something like our girls, then. They have got used to about everything there is going, that's to be afraid of, I reckon. They can take care of themselves pretty well, and they've had lots of chances to prove it, too."

"I'm a little sorry that yer brought 'em with yer, thought," and Poker Jack shook his head. "We'll strike Injuns afore we git to ther fort, all right."

"Well, you said there were only about forty of them, I believe?"

"Yes, but they're ther worst lot that could be scraped up. They're as cunnin' as foxes, an' there ain't one of 'em but what has took ther scalp of a white man, some time or other. Old Spotted Wolf kin fool all ther scouts what's been sent out ter locate him, jest as easy as nothin'! I would never have run across ther band when I did if it hadn't been an accident."

"If all you say is true I am more interested than ever," Wild declared. "I like to tackle hard problems. If Spotted Wolf proves to be one it will be all the better when it has been solved."

"Forty redskins what kin crawl like snakes in ther grass, an' shoot as straight as soldiers, ain't ter be sneezed at, not when it comes ter fightin'."

The cowboy shook his head, as though he thought our hero was up against a harder proposition than he realized he was.

But he did not know Young Wild West yet, and when he did begin to know him he would have cause to think differently.

The breakfast was prepared as soon as possible, and, after eating, our friends got ready to leave.

"See here," said Poker Jack, as they were riding away from the spot. "We kin strike up ther river a ways, an'

maybe git ther gals to the fore afore yer try anything, Wild."

"That will make it about two days later," was the reply. "No, if there are only forty of the redskins, we will strike out for them now. The girls will help us fight them, if it comes to that. Your sweetheart must be got away from them, and the quicker the better."

"All right. I'll stick. I'll fight as long as I kin pull a trigger."

It did not seem possible that a band of redskins, as bad as this one was said to be, would dare hang around south of the fort.

But just before noon our hero decided that such was the case, indeed.

They had reached a very rugged part of the country now. A double chain of mountains loomed up on the left, while to the right was a rolling plain, broken here and there by hills and small timber patches.

Straight ahead was a spare forest of pines and stunted oaks, and here it was, so Poker Jack declared, that the notorious Spotted Wolf had made his retreat, safe from the interference of the palefaces.

As they continued on their way the cowboy talked considerable about the White Girl Captive of the Sioux.

"It is too bad that she has to remain alone with a lot of rascally redskins so long," Arietta said, sympathetically.

"Well, she ain't exactly alone with 'em, yer see," answered Poker Jack. "Ther chief's own daughter is with them, too, an' she's in charge of ther gal. There's a little consolation in that, 'cause that squaw has got a big pull with old Spotted Wolf."

"Well, that certainly does make it much better," Arietta exclaimed. "I am glad to hear that. The companionship of a squaw is far better than to have none of her sex there. I now feel confident that she will be saved and returned to you safe and sound."

"Well, I sorter think that way myself, Miss Arietta."

The cowboy brightened up more than ever now.

He certainly had been encouraged greatly since he met Young Wild West and his friends.

Wild became convinced that there were redskins about when he saw the prints made by unshod horses and moccasined feet.

They were fresh prints, too, having been made within a few hours.

"I reckon we've got to go a little slow now," he said, when all had examined the telltale evidence. "The Sioux are not far away, and it may be that they have located us already. We will make for that ravine over there, and try and find a place to rest, where we will be free from observation."

Poker Jack shrugged his shoulders and cast a look around him.

But there was nothing to be seen of a human being, other than themselves.

"I wish I had a rifle," he said to Jim, as he rode along at the boy's side. "I might be of more help then."

"That's all right," Dart answered. "We have got an extra one, I reckon. If it comes to the point you can use it."

"To tell the truth, I am afraid that we are running

right into a trap. These hills is full of hidin' places fur ther redskins, an' there's no tellin' how soon we might run right among them."

"Well, that's all right. There's only forty of them, you say."

"Only forty! You fellows don't seem to think forty is very many."

"Well, there won't be that many after they tackle us once. You can depend on that. And the oftener they tackle us the less there will be of them."

The cowboy was appeased for the time.

Wild had made up his mind that he would not halt until he found just the spot that suited him.

That they were going to have trouble with the Sioux before very long, he felt certain; but he meant that they should be in a position to take care of themselves before it happened, if it was any way possible.

They pushed forward and soon reached the mouth of the ravine our hero had spoken of, and in a few minutes they were riding through it.

But Wild soon found that to go on through would simply give the redskins a very good chance at them, if there were any of them about.

There was a shallow cave right there, and the little brook that flowed through the ravine was within a few feet of it.

Rocks were piled about in fantastic forms, so it would make an admirable place to stand a siege.

"We'll stop right here for a while," he said. "I reckon we won't find a better place if we travel all day."

They were just dismounting when a rifle shot sounded up the ravine and a bullet went through the crown of Poker Jack's hat.

"There they are!" cried the cowboy, as he dodged behind a rock. "Look out!"

But Young Wild West did not need to be told that.

He turned in time to see a faint wreath of smoke curling upward from behind a rock about a hundred yards away, and he was watching for a chance to shoot the redskin who had fired the shot.

The girls got to the cave in a hurry, for they knew just what to do without waiting to be told.

Crang!

Another shot rang out and a bullet flattened against a rock less than three feet from where our hero was crouching.

This time he caught sight of the redskin who fired it, and, taking a quick aim, he pressed the trigger.

Crang!

A death yell sounded as the result. Cheyenne Charlie gave a chuckle.

"How's that?" he asked, turning to the cowboy.

"That's one less, anyhow," came the reply.

"Well, you jest wait! There'll be more than that ter bite ther dust, if they take a notion ter charge us. We're all right here. There ain't no forty Injuns livin' what kin git here an' make a hand-ter-hand fight. We won't let 'em do it, that's all!"

The girls were now crouching well in shelter, each holding a rifle.

"Hop," said Wild, coolly, "get Poker Jack that other Winchester."

"Allee light, Misler Wild," was the reply, and the Chinaman quickly obeyed.

"Now get the horses back there and unload them."

He referred to the pack horses, and the Celestials knew just what to do.

There was a short interval of silence after that, and then a volley was fired from the direction the other shots had come from.

But the redskins were simply wasting their powder, for they dared not show themselves, and could not get a chance at the brave party of whites without doing so.

"Don't fire a shot unless you are sure you are going to hit something," advised Wild, glancing at the cowboy, who seemed very anxious to get in a shot or two.

"All right," was the reply. "I reckon that's the proper way."

"Of course, it is. Let them keep on firing, if they want to. When we shoot we will do something."

Just how many they had to contend with they could not tell; but if the cowboy knew what he was talking about there had only been about forty to start with.

Wild figured that this must be about right, for the message he had received declared the same thing, as far as they knew at the fort.

Ten minutes passed, and then it was that a volley came from the high ground above the ravine and on the left.

Some of the bullets came dangerously close this time, and our friends realized that they were not going to have anything like an easy thing of it.

CHAPTER V.

POKER JACK IS CAPTURED.

Crang!

It was Cheyenne Charlie who fired this time.

He had caught a glimpse of one of the Indians as he peered from behind a rock, and, taking advantage of it, he had fired, and when he saw the redskin come crashing down into the ravine he smiled grimly and gave a nod of satisfaction.

"It's mighty funny that ther cavalrymen couldn't git them galoots, Wild," he said. "I reckon if they keep at it a little while longer we'll thin 'em down some."

"The cavalry wouldn't go at it the same as we are doing, Charlie," was the reply. "They would probably get the red fiends on the run, and then they would soon lose them. We are simply causing them to keep after us, and that's why we are doing so well. But if they happen to go around and get on this side of the ravine they will make it mighty bad for us, I reckon. Keep a sharp watch, all of you."

Then there was a silence for fully ten minutes.

But no one thought that the Sioux had given up the attack.

The probabilities were that they knew just how many there were of the palefaces, and that they had seen the girls with them.

This tempted them to keep at it until they caught them

As the minutes flitted by and a deathly stillness pervaded the ravine, our friends began to grow uneasy.

Their experience taught them that the Sioux were up to something.

It was not long before something happened that set the ball rolling again.

A cry of dismay suddenly escaped the lips of Poker Jack, and, turning, Wild and his partners saw the cowboy being rapidly pulled up the slanting side of the ravine.

The lariat that had caught him so suddenly was hidden from view in the vines that hung down from above, and as the man's arms had been pinned to his sides by the noose he could not draw his knife to free himself.

Wild was just going to fire as he caught a glimpse of the rope a foot above the cowboy's head, when he saw a big boulder come rolling down toward them.

"Back!" he shouted, motioning toward the cave.

Crash—thud!

The boulder struck the ground within three feet of Jim Dart, as he was springing back.

Yells of delight sounded from above, and then several shots were fired down at them.

But our friends were out of harm's way for the time being, and they could not do a thing to save the cowboy.

Poker Jack was drawn up quickly, and almost before he fully realized what had happened he was in the grasp of two stalwart braves.

He struggled hard to free himself, but it was of no avail.

"Ugh!" exclaimed a guttural voice, and then he saw the ugly, painted face of Spotted Wolf, the chief, bending over him.

"Better let me go, you red galoot!" he panted. "You'll git your medicine if yer don't!"

But his words had no effect at all, other than to cause the Sioux chief to laugh.

"Paleface brave heap much fool!" he exclaimed. "He get away from Spotted Wolf once; he no get away this time. The paleface maiden shall see him die at the stake. Then she will write a letter that will make the palefaces at the fort come to the terms of the great Sioux chief they fear so much. Ugh! Spotted Wolf heap much laugh."

He did laugh, and the half a dozen braves gathered about him joined in.

The cowboy saw that it was useless to plead with him, so he remained silent and permitted them to disarm and bind him without putting up the least struggle.

This done, the braves left the spot, which showed that they did not intend to try and get any more of those below—not just then, anyway.

The cowboy was carried to where the redskins' ponies were tethered.

Poker Jack was quickly bound to the back of one of these, and then the Sioux mounted and rode off.

The half a dozen braves who were taking care of the prisoner did not say anything, but rode on at a canter, following the lead of their chief.

In a few minutes they came to place where they could descend into the ravine, and then, without paying any

further attention to the palefaces a couple of hundred yards below, the chief called the solitary redskin who had been left there to keep a watch upon our friends to come with them, and then rode on up the ravine.

"Spotted Wolf heap much satisfied," said the chief, nodding to the captive. "He catch the lover of the paleface maiden. Lose two braves, but he will make the dogs back there suffer when night comes."

"I reckon you'll have a hard time makin' them fellers suffer, Spotted Wolf," answered Poker Jack. "Young Wild West is one of 'em, an' he never gives up when he once starts after a gang of Injuns. He won't do ther same as ther rest has been doin', not by a jugful! He'll keep after yer till he gits yer!"

"Young Wild West heap much boy," was the retort. "Spotted Wolf has heard of him. He no fight."

"You'll see. You better let me an' ther gal you've got git away as soon as yer kin. An' then you'd better lay low, if yer want ter keep from gittin' you're medicine."

But the chief, who had been very successful in eluding the troopers and scouts, laughed derisively.

Spotted Wolf had come to that frame of mind that makes one feel that he is invincible.

If the soldiers at the fort could not bring him to terms, how could a boy do it, even if it was Young Wild West, the hated enemy of the Sioux?

The headquarters of the revolting band of Indians lay in a very secluded part of the mountainside. In fact, it was a spot that was almost impenetrable to any but those who knew the way, for narrow ledges had to be traversed, and there was a narrow pass that ran between two cliffs that would never be noticed by any one, unless they found it by the merest accident, or were looking for it.

There was really no way of trailing the redmen to this hiding place, since the rocky way refused to leave the tracks of even a horse.

Poker Jack knew this only too well, and as they rode up and down and over the ledges his heart sank within him.

"Young Wild West won't never be able ter find ther way here," he thought. "An' if he does find ther way, what kin he do? There's too many of ther redskins, though he allowed that forty of 'em wasn't so very many. This are too bad! I'm about ther only one as knows jest how ter git here, an' now I'm in ther worst fix I ever was in. I'll be mighty lucky if I live ter see ther sun rise to-morrer, an' then what'll become of poor Susie?"

He uttered a groan as he thought of the probable fate of the White Girl Captive of the Sioux, and, hearing it, one of his captors gave him a dig in the ribs with the butt of his gun.

"That's all right, you red galoot!" exclaimed the helpless cowboy. "I was only laughin' ter myself ter think what fools you redskins was. Jest don't think that I'm afraid of anythin' happenin' ter me."

One thing about Poker Jack was that he was not going to let his captors know that he was a bit worried—not if he could help it.

But the Sioux brave was satisfied that he had heard a groan of distress, and that pleased him a great deal, for an Indian does like to torture a prisoner.

It was just about half an hour after the capture of

the cowboy that Spotted Wolf and his braves reached the camp.

They had brought one of their dead with them, but the other had been left in the ravine, because it would have been sure death for any of them who went to reclaim the body.

But the chief said that they would get it that night, when they went to clean up the rest of the palefaces.

Poker Jack glanced around the Indian camp as he rode into it tied to the pony.

There were two wretched-looking tepees there, and he knew that his sweetheart must be in one of them, since he saw nothing of her outside.

The other was probably the private quarters of the chief.

The redskins who had remained at the camp were waiting for their returning brothers, for they had heard them coming, and a signal had been given and returned.

When they saw that a paleface prisoner was with them a shout of approval went up.

Spotted Wolf looked very important as he stopped his horse right in their midst and bowed to the salute that was given him.

"Catch one paleface; have more before another sun," he said.

Cries of approval went up at this, and then it was noticed that there was a dead brave being borne along on horseback at the tail end of the procession.

That caused a change in the feelings of the redskins.

But the chief made a little speech, using the language of the tribe, and he soon made them satisfied that it was all for the best that two of the braves had been shot.

The glances that the captive cowboy had shot at him were enough to make an ordinary person quail, but he put on an air of indifference, for he had been through the mill, so to speak, and he would not let them know that he was even worried.

He was soon taken from the horse and tied securely to a tree and then the returning braves went for the food that was waiting for them.

The meal over with and the chief lighted his pipe and smoked in silence, probably thinking of what he would do with the cowboy he had caught a second time.

CHAPTER VI.

WILD DECIDES ON A PLAN OF ACTION.

Young Wild West and his friends were not a little disturbed over what had happened.

The capture of the cowboy had been accomplished in such an unexpected and clever way that even our hero was ready to say that the redskins had clearly outwitted them.

"But 'he laughs best who laughs last,' " he said, shaking his head. "I reckon this thing isn't over yet. Just keep your eyes open, everybody."

But they were not disturbed again, as the reader knows. As soon as Wild became convinced that the Sioux had

retired for the time being he made ready to start on the trail.

But it was now past noon, and Cheyenne Charlie suggested that they have something to eat.

"Wait till I find out for certain that the redskins have left the vicinity," said our hero. "You can't tell what they are up to, you know. Jim, suppose you come with me? You are mighty good at climbing a tree, and I think it will be a good idea to take an observation."

"All right," Dart answered. "I am ready to do anything you say, Wild."

"Be careful," cautioned Arietta, who could not make herself believe that the Sioux had left the vicinity.

"Leave that to us, Et," was our hero's reply. "I reckon we'll be on the lookout for danger."

Hugging the foot of the cliffs, they moved on in the direction the first shots had come from.

When they got to the spot where the first Indian had dropped Wild gave a nod of satisfaction.

"They have gone for the present, and you can bet on it, Jim," said he. "They wouldn't have bothered to take away their dead yet, if they were going to hang around."

"They've took one of the carcasses, that's right," Dart answered. "But they didn't take the risk to try and get the other one. It's a wonder they didn't show a flag of truce, so they could do it."

"Oh, they mean to come back, all right. Probably they will wait till dark."

"Most likely."

The two now moved along, keeping a sharp watch and treading without making any noise.

In this way they soon reached the spot where the redskins had come down into the ravine.

The ground being soft and yielding there, it was easy for them to tell that the tracks were fresh, and which way they ran.

"Now, Jim," said Wild, as he noticed that the Sioux had gone on through the ravine, "I reckon we'll go up where they were, and then you can climb a tree and take a look around."

"Good!"

Both were now sure that the redskins had left the vicinity, so they did not have to be so cautious.

In a couple of minutes they had reached a high spot above the ravine, and Jim was looking for a tree that was suitable for the purpose he wanted to put it to.

A big pine that was as straight as an arrow appealed to him, and, after making sure that they had not come into any trap, he started to climb it.

Jim went up the pine with the agility of a squirrel, Wild walking along the spot where the Indians had been when they made the capture of the cowboy.

He got there in a few seconds, and when he saw how easy it must have been for one of the Sioux to drop a lariat over Poker Jack's head he shrugged his shoulders and muttered:

"That was our fault, I reckon. We should have looked up here. Why, it is not over eighteen or twenty feet down there."

Dropping to his hands and knees, he leaned over and could see those waiting below.

"Hello!" he called out, softly.

Instantly all eyes were directed upward.

"Great gimlets!" cried Cheyenne Charlie. "How did yer git there, Wild?"

"The same way the redskins did," was the reply.

"Where's Jim?"

"Up a tree, back there. He's taking a look around to see where the reds are."

"Wild it wasn't such a very hard thing for the Indian to rope the cowboy, was it?" Arietta said, as she looked up.

"No, not very hard. You just come out, so you are clear of the rocks, and I'll show you how I can rope you and haul you up."

"Well, it would be all right if there was any necessity of it; but as there isn't I guess I won't let you try it."

"All right. But I haven't my lariat, anyhow. Just tell Wing to hurry and get something to eat, for we are going to take the trail of the Sioux just as soon as we have eaten. They won't expect anything like that, and we may be able to fool them."

"Shall we make a fire an' go ahead, ther same as if everything was all right?" asked the scout.

"Yes. The way is clear now. We won't be bothered for a while, for I feel certain that the Sioux have made sure of keeping Poker Jack, and have taken him off to their camp, wherever it is."

Wing flew to get a fire going, and as Wild made his way back to the tree he could see the smoke rising from the ravine.

Jim was coming down when he got there, and he seemed to be well satisfied with the result of his observation.

"Well, how did you make out, Jim?" our hero asked.

"Fine!" was the reply. "I saw the camp of the redskins. They have not reached it yet, but they are heading that way, with Poker Jack tied on the back of a pony."

"That's what I call fine! I hardly expected you would have such luck as that. Did you locate the spot well enough to be able to reach it without following a trail? You know it is likely that the redskins have a way of hiding their trail."

"I reckon we can get there all right. But suppose you go up and have a look for yourself?"

"Good! I reckon that will be the best thing to do. Here goes!"

The young deadshot was soon climbing the tree.

It was one of the tallest to be found on the high elevation, and it was no wonder that Jim had been able to see the redskins.

About three miles off to the northwest he could see the camp that lay in a little hollow on the mountainside.

Though it had taken the Sioux half an hour to get there, the distance in a straight line was not so great.

Wild took in the scene with no little interest.

The band of redskins was not more than a mile away, and as he looked at them they disappeared around a bend, only to reappear the next minute in another spot.

The air was clear, so he could see a long distance with little or no trouble.

Wild was not long in noting some landmarks, and then he descended the tree.

"I reckon we can find the spot all right," he said. "Now,

Jim, we'll go back to the camp and have dinner. As soon as we have had it we will light out as straight as we can for old Spotted Wolf's camp. He won't be looking for us to make a move like that; he will be apt to think that we will stay in the ravine, or ride off to look for help to save Poker Jack. If we don't find the White Girl Captive of the Sioux by to-morrow night, and save her, too, I'll miss my guess, that's all!"

Jim nodded.

He had great faith in what the young deadshot said, and he actually believed that they were going to win out against the forty redskins.

"There may be a detachment of cavalry somewhere around," went on our hero, as they made their way down into the ravine, "but I am not going to worry about it much. If we can't outwit the Sioux it will be because we have forgotten what we learned since we first struck out."

"That's it, Wild," Dart answered.

When they got back to the camp Wing had the noon-day meal well under way.

The scout's wife was helping him, so it could be hurried as much as possible.

"I reckon it would be a good idea ter try an' shoot somethin' fur fresh meat afore we git too close to ther redskins, Wild," suggested Charlie. "S'pose I try my luck as soon as I eat my dinner?"

"Well, you don't want to be longer than half an hour, then," was the reply.

"All right. I'll take Hop with me ter carry back ther game. I'll bet I don't have ter go more'n a quarter of a mile afore I rout out a bear. That place up there looks jest like ther hangout of bears."

He pointed to the wooded slope that ran on up from the top of the cliff, on the side opposite to the one the Sioux had appeared on.

As soon as the meal was ready Charlie and Hop proceeded to eat.

They ate hurriedly, too, the rest taking their time about it.

"We will be ready when you come back, Charlie," said our hero. "Go ahead and get your bear."

"Me helpee cally um meat in, so be," spoke up Hop, with his mouth full of food. "Me likee go with Misler Charlie velly muchee."

In a few minutes the two left the camp, Hop carrying a lariat, which might be needed.

The rest finished eating, then they set to getting the pack horses loaded.

Young Wild West had decided on a plan of action and he was bound to carry it out, if it was any way possible.

It was hardly more than ten minutes after the scout and the Chinaman had disappeared from view when the report of a rifle sounded.

"Charlie has struck something, all right," observed Jim Dart. "Well, we need something in the way of game, I reckon."

CHAPTER VII.

OUR FRIENDS STEAL A MARCH ON THE SIOUX.

Cheyenne Charlie and Hop Wah had not gone very far when the tracks of a bear were found.

The scout found them, of course, for he could notice such things before the Chinaman could.

"I reckon we'll have bear meat fur breakfast in ther mornin'," he said in a low tone. "Jest git your knife ready, Hop. We want ter git them two hams an' be back to ther camp in time ter start. There's a whole lot of work ahead, yer know."

"Allee light, Misler Charlie; you killee bear; me cuttee off um hams, so be," was the reply.

It being a section of the country where bears and other wild animals are likely to be found at any time, there was nothing remarkable about them finding the bear tracks so soon.

Charlie went right after the bear, Hop following him, his big hunting knife in his hand.

Up steep ascents, down into gullies and across level patches the tracks led, and in a very few minutes the scout caught a glimpse of the bear.

He took a quick aim and fired, and as the report rang out the animal rolled over.

"Git at him, Hop," he said. "Yer know what I said about how much of a hurry we was in."

"Allee light, Misler Charlie," was the reply.

The Chinaman then ran forward to get at work on the bear.

Bruin was just about giving up the ghost when he got there, so he stepped back and waited until it was all over.

Charlie came up and grinned when he saw the Chinaman was afraid to begin until he was sure that the bear could not hurt him.

It was just then that a growl sounded in the bushes, and the next second the mate of the slain bear appeared.

It was a big fellow, too, and when Hop saw it he turned to flee.

But, unfortunately, his toe caught against a root and he fell.

The bear acted much quicker than Charlie thought it would, and, with an angry growl, it sprang for the prostrate Chinaman.

Crang!

The scout fired, and the next minute the animal and the Chinaman were rolling on the ground in a mixed mess.

"Hip hi!" yelled Hop, as he rolled over from a kick the dying bear landed upon him. "Me allee samee velly muchee scare, so be. Stoppee! Hip hi!"

Charlie grabbed him and pulled him out of the way.

"You're all right, you heathen galoot!" he exclaimed. "What in thunder did yer want ter trip fur, anyhow?"

"Me no helpee," declared Hop. "Bear allee samee comee muchee quickee."

Fortunately he was not hurt much, and when he had brushed himself off he turned to the dead bears and shook his fist at them.

"Makee too muchee scare, so be," he said.

"Never mind about that. Jest git ter work on 'em. We won't bother with ther hides. Four hams will be all we want of bear meat, I reckon. They're both old, an' they'll be tough enough ter sharpen good teeth, all right. Git at work."

"Allee light."

Hop picked up his knife and the two began the work of cutting off what they wanted from the two bear carcasses.

It did not take them long to do this, and then they started back, well laden from the results of the brief hunt.

It was not much more than half an hour from the time they started when they got to the ravine.

They found that everything had been made ready to leave, and, pausing long enough to relate what had happened to the Chinaman, the scout mounted his horse.

A few minutes later they were following the trail made by Spotted Wolf and his braves.

But Wild did not propose to follow it very far, even if it showed up plainly.

He meant to keep far enough away from it so if the redskins came back to the ravine to look for them they would miss them, and they would thus be able to get close to the Sioux camp and do something toward liberating the captives held there.

Half a mile up the mountainside they lost the trail of the redskins.

But Wild cared nothing for this.

Both he and Jim knew the exact direction to go in order to reach the camp, so there was nothing in that.

Anyhow, they meant to steer clear of them, as has been stated.

To such experienced Westerners as Young Wild West and his partners it was easy to pick a way to get to a certain point, and unless they were halted by some abyss or perpendicular cliff they were bound to get where they wanted to go.

And even if they were halted, they could go around and find a way.

Our friends kept right on, heading in a direction that was slightly to the left of the place where the Sioux camp was located.

If they kept right on in that direction, Wild figured that they would reach a point about a mile to the south of the Indian camp when they got as far as they wanted to go.

This would be far enough away, for there were cliffs and ridges that would intervene, and it was hardly likely that a rifle shot could be heard by the redskins.

On they went, sometimes being compelled to halt and lead their horses over dangerous places.

But once they got up our hero would be satisfied, for he meant to come back by the route the Sioux used.

It was firmly fixed in his mind that he was going to effect the release of the White Girl Captive of the Sioux, as well as save her cowboy lover.

They were more than an hour in reaching a place which Wild thought was far enough, and then Jim dismounted and ascended the tallest tree there was there.

The boy soon found that the dashing young deadshot had used very good judgment, for not more than a mile away he could see the Indian camp.

Jim took a good look and saw that Poker Jack was tied to a tree and in no immediate danger, and then, after counting the redskins as well as he could he came down the tree.

He quickly let his companions know the result of his

investigation, and then every one was pleased, for they felt that they had outwitted the Sioux.

"Just watch out for a good place to camp," Wild said, nodding to his partners. "We want a regular fort, if we can get it, for we can't tell just what will happen before we get away from here. This is a pretty bad piece of country, as far as fast traveling is concerned, and we have got to depend a great deal on strategy and hiding. Jim, did you notice about how many there were of the redskins?"

"I couldn't count them very well; but I am certain that there are not more than forty, as Poker Jack said," was the reply.

"Good! Now for a headquarters. The chances are that a detachment of cavalry will be along at any time, though whether they will come up this way or not, I cannot say. However, it will be a good idea for us to stop at some place from which we can keep a lookout around the surrounding country. We may need the help of the cavalry before we are done with this, though I reckon we'll be able to get the captives away from the Sioux without their help. We want to get away from here after we do it. That is the thing."

They moved on, and in a very few minutes they found as good a place to camp as they could expect to in such a part of the mountains.

There was water there, and this was one of the main essentials, providing they had to remain there for a day or two.

The grass was in plenty, too, so the horses would not go without fodder.

The spot they chose was a hollow under an overhanging cliff, forming a half circle.

In order to drive them from it the Indians must expose themselves for a distance of a full hundred yards, and to such marksmen as our friends were the Sioux could but stand a very poor show.

The place being selected, the Chinamen went right at work putting things in shape.

"I reckon this is a finer place than what we had down in the ravine, anyhow," said our hero, as he looked around and gave a nod of satisfaction. "The red galoots can't hurt us from the top of the cliffs here. And there won't be any danger of them dropping a noose over any one's head, either. We'll show old Spotted Wolf that he has gone just about the limit, I reckon."

The boy spoke in such a confident way that his partners and the girls were convinced that they were bound to win out.

"And that tree up there will be our observation point," added Jim, pointing to a towering pine that reared itself from the top of the cliff.

"That's right, Jim," nodded our hero. "Now let's join in getting things in shape, and then we'll strike out and see what we can do."

In less than half an hour they had everything fixed to their liking, even to a supply of wood to keep the fire going.

The smoke they caused could hardly be seen at the Indian camp, because there was a high, wooded ridge between them. It would fade into nothingness before it got that high.

Yet the distance between the two points was barely a mile.

"I reckon we'll take a little scout and find out just how the land lies, Charlie," said Wild, when they had finished arranging things. "Jim, you keep a sharp watch, for we don't want to let the redskins steal a march on us if we can help it."

"You can bet that they won't get here, Wild!" was Dart's reply.

"All right, then. Come on, Charlie!"

The dashing young deadshot and the scout set out to pay a visit to the Sioux camp in the interest of the White Girl Captive and her cowboy lover.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE WHITE GIRL CAPTIVE AND THE SQUAW.

Poker Jack Hayes had not long been an inmate of the Sioux camp than he got a chance to see his sweetheart.

The White Girl Captive was brought out of the tepee that had been allotted to her as her place of abode while in the power of her rascally captors, for the purpose of tormenting the cowboy, and also to show her how useless it was for her to think of getting away from the band of Indians, unless her friends should come to the terms the old chief wanted to make.

Poker Jack's face flushed with pleasure when he saw his sweetheart, and she, too, lighted up, causing Spotted Wolf to frown deeply.

But the chief caused the girl to be led straight to the man, so they might talk together, he thinking that it would be the means of helping along the fiendish game he was playing.

"Oh, Jack!" cried the girl, as she reached him and fell sobbing on his breast. "I was hoping that you would lead the soldiers here and rescue me. Oh, oh!"

"I was hopin' so, too, Susie," he replied, trying to appear cool and unconcerned. "But I heard up at ther fort that Young Wild West an' his pards had been sent fur, an' I went down ter Cheyenne ter meet 'em. I found 'em last night, an' they're right close by now. Don't you worry no more. They'll be here putty soon. Ther day won't be over afore Young Wild West will light on this here camp an' make ther redskins understand that they've run ther length of their rope. Why, they shot two of ther galoots just afore noon, gal! Jest keep a stiff upper lip. It's all goin' ter come out right. You've done nobly so far, an' it can't last much longer."

"No, Jack; it can't last much longer. I couldn't stand it if it did," was the reply. "This morning I almost thought that Silver Stream, the chief's daughter, was going to give in to me and plead with her father for my liberty. But she wouldn't do it, Jack; she says she can't do that much, but will not let me be harmed so long as she is kept with me."

"Well, she's been some good to yer, anyhow," the cowboy answered. "I don't s'pose she dares ter come out an' do any more fur yer. Old Spotted Wolf wouldn't allow it."

"Oh, she is not afraid of her father," was the girl's reply. "She seems to wield a big influence with him, too."

"Good! Then maybe you kin git her ter put a word in fur me. I reckon ther galoots might try ter git rid of me if Young Wild West don't happen ter git her in time."

"Who is Young Wild West, Jack?"

"He's only a boy, but he's ther Champion Deadshot of the West, an' ther boss Indian fighter, without a doubt. He's got two pards with him what don't know what fear is, any more than he does. An' then he's got his sweetheart with him, too, an' two other gals, so when yer git out of this scrape you'll have some of yer own sex ter talk to on ther way back to ther ranch. Don't you worry now, Susie. It ain't goin' ter be long. Young Wild West said last night that it wouldn't be more'n forty-eight hours afore you'd be free, an' they do say as how he never makes no mistake."

But the captive girl shook her head.

She had been in the power of the band of Sioux so long that escape now seemed almost impossible to her.

The two talked on, Jack saying nothing but words of encouragement, and the redskins not interfering.

They hardly listened, even, though if they had they could not have heard much of what was being said, since the couple spoke in very low tones.

When they had been talking together a little more than five minutes the Indian maiden referred to as the daughter of the chief came out of the tepee and walked over to them.

"The paleface maiden will now come back to her tepee," she said, in a musical voice. "She has seen and talked with her lover, and she must be satisfied."

"No, Silver Stream," retorted Susie. "I want to talk longer with him."

The Sioux maiden shook her head.

"It must not be," she declared. "She will but be all the more sad when the time comes for her lover to die. My father, the great War Chief of the Sioux, has sworn to burn the paleface man at the stake, the same as his forefathers did to his paleface enemies. The paleface maiden will feel like dying, too, then, and Silver Stream will also be sad, for she will think of the beautiful paleface boy she once saw, and whom she loves with all her heart without his knowing it."

She took the girl by the arm and gently forced her to let her go to her captive lover.

"Go on, Susie," said Poker Jack, gritting upon his teeth to keep back his emotion. "Yer kin come out an' have another little talk with me putty soon, maybe. That squaw ain't ther sort ter go back on yer, if yer insist on doin' it. I'm worth a hundred dead men yet, an' don't yer furgit it!"

The eyes of the captive girl brightened and her wan cheeks flushed as she heard his cheering words.

As the cowboy had told our friends, Susie Morse was a very pretty girl.

It may have been because of this that she was selected as the one to capture by the rascally old chief, so he might dictate the terms he saw fit to with the authorities.

But, anyhow, she had been seized and carried off, and she was still a captive in the hands of the Sioux.

It was plain that a certain degree of sympathy existed between the Sioux maiden and the fair captive.

But whether or not it would ultimately be the means of assisting the freeing of Susie remained to be seen.

As the two entered the tepee and sat down on the warm skins and blankets, the white girl broke into a flood of tears.

"Don't cry," the squaw said, consolingly. "Silver Stream will never see you harmed, Susie."

"But Jack must not be harmed, either, Silver Stream," came the quick retort, as the girl looked her in the eyes. "I will die if he does!"

The Indian maiden shook her head.

"Spotted Wolf has declared war on the palefaces," she said slowly. "He has committed many murders, as the palefaces say, and he will be hanged if the soldiers catch him. He knows this, and he will kill the paleface he has twice captured, for it will be no worse for him in the end."

"Silver Stream," said Susie, calming herself by a great effort, "you say that you love a paleface boy. Would you let your father kill him if he were here in the place of my lover?"

"No!"

The answer flashed back quickly enough, and the sudden gleam that came in the dark eyes of the squaw told plainly that she meant it.

"Well, you have said that you thought a great deal of me, and that you would not allow any harm to befall me; now I say to you, save my lover! Think of what you would do for your own lover, and act as though you were in my place."

"I have no lover, Susie. I love the young paleface, but he does not know it. Anyhow, he does not love me, I know. I hardly think he would know me if he came here and saw me now. But he is far away, and I never expect to see him again. He is the greatest young brave of all the palefaces, I have heard, and he has a paleface maiden he calls his sweetheart. Silver Stream has no right to love him, but she can't help it."

"You only saw him once, you say, Silver Stream?"

"Yes, only once; but I loved him the moment I looked upon his handsome form and face. It was a year ago, when he, with the soldiers, stopped the Sioux and the Utes from the war on the palefaces. It was his great work that did it, and the palefaces made much of him. Though he helped kill many of my tribe, I loved him all the more, and when he walked through the camp after it was all over, I waited for him to look upon me and smile. Others of the palefaces did look upon me, and some of them told me I was very pretty. But he walked on, thinking only of his own paleface maiden with the yellow hair."

"What is the name of this paleface boy, Silver Stream?" queried Susie, who had become deeply interested in what the squaw said, in spite of the terrible situation she was placed in.

"Young Wild West," came the reply from the lips of Silver Stream, while her dark eyes fairly danced.

"What!" gasped the White Captive of the Sioux. "Why, Young Wild West is not far from here now, Silver Stream. It was he and his partners who shot the

two braves you told me about a little while ago. He is coming to save me."

It is rarely that Indians give way to their emotion, but Silver Stream was an exception just then.

The thought that the dashing young paleface she loved in such an irresistible way was near made her happy for the moment. Her bosom heaved convulsively and a sigh came from her lips.

"I must see the brave, young paleface if he is so near," she said. "But I will not let him know that I love him. That would not do. I must first find that he loves me."

Susie Morse began to think that at last a way had opened for her escape from her fiendish captors.

She knew what it was to love, and when she learned that the daughter of Spotted Wolf was in love with the very person her promised husband placed so much reliance in she could but feel encouraged.

"To win Young Wild West from his own sweetheart Silver Stream should not try," she said. "But if she finds that he does love her, then it will be different."

"The paleface maiden speaks straight," replied the squaw. "Silver Stream will never tell of her love to Young Wild West unless she knows that it is right for her to do so. She will die first, Susie!"

"Ugh!"

The guttural exclamation sounded at the entrance of the tepee, and as the two maidens looked around they saw the face of Spotted Wolf.

That he had heard their conversation they both knew, and now a new difficulty confronted the White Girl Captive of the Sioux.

CHAPTER IX.

WILD SAVES THE COWBOY.

Wild and Charlie made their way quickly along the mountainside.

It was a great deal easier to travel on foot than to go by horse there, and they gradually neared the camp of the Sioux.

Such a mission as they were now on was nothing new to either of them, and both were confident of success.

Wild knew that the danger lay in leaving the cowboy in the power of the redskins, for he had heard enough to convince him that the girl would not be harmed so long as the daughter of the chief was with her.

The first thing to be done, then, was to get Poker Jack away from the red fiends.

The two kept on, moving cautiously, and it was not long before they could smell the smoke of a fire that was not far away.

"I reckon it's jest about cold enough ter make 'em keep a fire goin', Wild," the scout whispered. "I wouldn't be a bit surprised if we got some snow out of this afore many hours. It's goin' ter be a putty cold night, if I'm any judge."

"That's right, Charlie," was the reply. "We want to get through with this job before it does snow, if we possibly can. To be caught up here in a snowstorm won't

be a very pleasant thing, though we have got plenty of blankets to keep warm with and there is no lacking of fuel to keep a fire going. But don't talk about the snow just yet. We've got enough on hand to think about without borrowing any trouble."

They moved on without saying anything more, and a few minutes later they caught a glimpse of the tepees in the camp through an opening in the trees.

Wild and Charlie became very cautious now.

"You stay right here, Charlie, and I'll go and see what I can do for Poker Jack."

"All right," was the reply. "Yer kin bet yer life that I'll shoot if yer happen ter git caughted."

Wild stole up to the camp.

The redskins had a fire going in the centre of the hollow they were located in, and they were sitting around it in a circle.

It was easy for our hero to pick out the tepee that the White Girl Captive of the Sioux was confined in, for there were but two of them, and one of them was thrown open, disclosing the chief sitting there, smoking his pipe.

Fully twenty feet from the fire was the tree that Poker Jack was tied to, and there was not an Indian within a dozen feet of him.

That the redskins were confident that their hiding place would not be found easily, and that they never even dreamed of such a thing as the few palefaces they had left in the ravine trying to find it, was quite evident.

The dashing young deadshot took in the situation in less than ten seconds.

It occurred to him that he never had an easier chance to rescue a captive than right now.

The blue smoke from the burning pile of logs the Sioux were gathered about went up almost straight, and now and then it would settle and almost obscure the captive from their view.

But he had been tied in a manner that made it impossible for him to get loose unaided.

Wild noticed that one of the redskins sat so he faced the tepee the girl prisoner was in, and that his eyes seldom left it.

This told the boy that if the Sioux thought there was any danger anywhere it would come from that tepee.

Wild wondered a little at this, but when he considered that the girl was most likely free of bonds he concluded that this was the cause of a watch being kept in that direction.

"I reckon I'll get at work now," he muttered. "Poker Jack first, and then the girl captive."

But just then the flap of the tepee opened and out stepped Silver Stream.

Wild never remembered of having seen her before, so he did not have cause to do anything out of the ordinary just then.

That the squaw was in love with him he did not know.

But he was destined to find this out, and that quickly.

Silver Stream picked up a pail and started for a little mountain stream that was right where Charlie was in waiting.

Wild had noticed the spot, and he thought he had better go and warn the scout to be on the lookout, in case he did not see the squaw approaching.

Noiselessly he crept back to where he had left him.

Charlie was still there, and one glance at him told Wild that he knew the squaw was coming.

"Hide yourself, Charlie," said the young deadshot. "There is a good chance to free the cowboy now. I'll go after him as soon as the squaw gets the water and goes back to the tepee."

"All right," was the whispered reply, and then they both crept into the bushes.

The next minute Silver Stream appeared.

But, instead of dipping the pail into the pool, she sat down on the ground before the water and began surveying herself in the mirror-like surface.

Our two friends were within a dozen feet of her, and, finding that she was in no hurry to get the water she had come for, Wild decided to go on and steal up behind the cowboy prisoner and cut him loose.

But just then he gave a start, for he heard his name mentioned by the squaw.

Charlie heard it, too, and they both listened.

"The paleface maiden loves, and so do I," she said, speaking in English, and in a low, musical voice. "She loves the man she calls Jack, and I love Young Wild West. Yes! Silver Stream loves the paleface boy, but he does not know it. He never will know it, unless he shows that he loves Silver Stream."

Then she looked at her reflection in the water again and proceeded to fix her hair, just as though she really expected to meet the one she loved and wanted to be looking at her best.

Wild was much puzzled, for he could not remember of having seen the squaw, try as he might.

The scout grinned, for evidently he thought it was a good thing that Silver Stream, as he heard her call herself, was in love with Wild.

It might help out a great deal.

Silver Stream was evidently satisfied with the way she looked now, for she arose, and, taking the pail, dipped it into the pool.

When it was filled she started back for the camp, acting as though she was much satisfied with her trip to the brook.

Wild started after her, cautioning Charlie to remain where he was, and be ready for anything that might happen.

The brave boy knew that they were going to have a hard time in getting away, even if they succeeded in getting the cowboy free.

Then, too, their presence in the vicinity would become known.

But it was hardly likely that the redskins would think that they were camped so near, and it might be that they would go on down to the ravine, thinking the escape had been made to that place.

This was the hope they had to rely upon, and, figuring it out that way, Wild crept around and got behind the tree to which Poker Jack was bound.

The Indians were still gathered in a circle about the fire.

But the one who was watching the tepee before still had his eyes fixed upon it, and this told our hero that he had been appointed by the chief for that purpose.

Spotted Wolf was smoking away in silence, but when his daughter came back with the water from the brook his eyes followed her, and Wild could not help noticing that there was a peculiar gleam in them.

"He acts as though he was not on the best of terms with Silver Stream," Wild thought. "I wonder what it all means, anyhow? Why should that squaw be in love with me? I don't know her; and how it is that she knows me I can't understand. I am not in the habit of leading girls to take a notion to me, especially squaws. Well, she must have seen me somewhere. Anyhow, it makes little difference to me, so long as I accomplish my purpose."

The supreme moment had nearly arrived, for he saw that there could be no better chance than to act at that time.

Creeping behind the tree, he reached out and touched Poker Jack on the leg.

As he supposed, the cowboy was too well trained to cry out or otherwise make known that there was some one behind him.

But the prisoner was really much surprised, though he had been hoping right along that Young Wild West would come to his rescue.

Wild said not a word, but proceeded to cut the rope that bound the man to the tree.

He soon had it done, and still the redskins were not aware that any such thing was transpiring.

The next thing Wild did was to cut the rope that bound the arms of the cowboy to his side.

Then he slipped a revolver in his hand and gave a slight pull on the sleeve of his coat, which meant that he was to leave his position and follow him.

Poker Jack cast a look at the tepee his sweetheart was in, and then he stepped around behind the tree.

"Come on!" whispered Wild. "We will get the girl later."

A nod was the reply, and then the two hurriedly, but noiselessly, left the spot.

And the Indians, utterly unconscious of the fact that their prisoner had escaped, remained in the circle about the fire, the smoke flying across the open space as a gust of wind from the north hit it, shutting off the scene.

CHAPTER X.

WILD MAKES A FAILURE OF IT.

Young Wild West was elated at the easy way the release of the prisoner had been effected.

As soon as they got about a hundred yards from the camp he halted.

"I reckon I may as well go back and have a try for the girl," he said. "The redskins don't seem to be taking much notice of things, so I may as well strike while the iron is hot."

But just then a yell sounded, and then he knew that the escape of the cowboy had been discovered.

"Don't run!" he whispered, as Poker Jack made a move to dash away.

"Here's a tree that we kin climb inter, an' be out of

sight of 'em, if yer want ter stay around here, Wild," the scout spoke up. "I reckon they'll go down ther trail pell-mell, thinkin' we've headed fur ther ravine. They won't think ter look so close by fur us."

"That's right, Charlie," our hero answered, as he looked at the tree and nodded.

It was a thick pine, and there was plenty of room for all three to conceal themselves in its branches.

At a motion from our hero Poker Jack started up the tree.

Charlie followed, and then came Wild.

The boy was not a minute too soon, either, for just then fully a score of the redskins came in sight.

It so happened that the path they had made in going to and from their retreat led right along close to the very tree our friends had taken refuge in.

Charlie sat hugging a limb with his left arm, his revolver grasped in his right, as Wild came up.

"Don't shoot at them," cautioned our hero, who thought the scout might forget himself and open fire if the Sioux came pretty close.

A nod was the reply, and then they watched and waited for the redskins to go past.

After the first loud yell the Sioux remained silent, no doubt thinking it best not to let the escaping prisoner and those who had aided him know that they were after them.

They went on down the mountainside, some of them coming within twenty feet of the tree.

They went right on, and our hero took care to count them.

There were just twenty of them, and the old chief was one of the number.

As they got partly out of hearing he went on up to the top of the tree and took a look around.

It was only natural that he should turn his gaze in the direction the redskins were going first, and when he saw that they were hurrying on down the mountain he gave a nod of satisfaction and turned his eyes toward the camp.

Much to his surprise, he saw two redskins leading the White Girl Captive from the tepee.

They took her to the very tree the cowboy had been tied to and proceeded to bind her to it.

Silver Stream stood in front of the tepee, looking on, but she did not offer to interfere.

When he saw that there were just nineteen redskins left at the camp Young Wild West gave a sigh of satisfaction and started to descend the tree.

"I reckon I'll soon free the girl now," he muttered. "If we can't get away from that lot of redskins, I'll miss my guess, that's all!"

Down he went, and when he got to where Charlie and the cowboy were he said to them:

"Come on down. I am going after the girl now. I reckon I'll come pretty near getting her, too."

"Oh, I only hope you do!" exclaimed Jack, fervently.

"Well, I want you fellows to stand ready to do some shooting, for the chances are that there will have to be some done this time. I won't have such an easy time fooling the redskins as I did in your case, for they will think that we are all close by. Take it cool, and be ready for anything that happens."

The young deadshot quickly dropped to the ground, so lightly that his feet made not the least sound.

Then he started without delay for the camp of the Sioux.

In less than a minute he was within fifty feet of it.

Two of the Indians were guarding the girl, as though they meant sure that she would not make her escape as her lover had done.

The rest were standing about the fire, listening for the shout they expected to hear when the chief and the others overtook the escaping cowboy and those who had cut him loose.

Wild saw that a clump of bushes lay between him and the tree, and he figured it out that he might be able to cut the girl loose and get her away before the rest were aware of it, providing he could overcome the two guards.

He did not want to shoot them—for it was not his way to do that, unless it was absolutely necessary, such as saving a human life.

He reached the bush, determined to make a grand effort, however.

Charlie and the cowboy would surely open fire on the redskins should they press him too hard.

As he stepped from behind the bush, a revolver in his hand, his foot pressed upon a dry twig and it snapped.

Instantly the two redskins turned their heads and saw him.

There was no backing down now, and as one of them drew a tomahawk from his belt the young deadshot sprang forward.

Divining his intention, the nearest of the redskins made a leap for him.

Changing the revolver in his hand so he grasped it by the muzzle, the young deadshot struck out with it.

Then something happened in the way of an interference.

As Wild felled one of the redskins by a blow from the butt of his revolver, and sprang for the one with the tomahawk, the chief's daughter suddenly appeared.

Raising her hands, she exclaimed:

"Go back, Young Wild West! I will save her!"

But at that instant half a dozen of the redskins who had been gathered about the fire came rushing for the spot.

Wild knew he was in for it, so he called out, loudly:

"Look out, Charlie! They're after me!"

The redskin with the tomahawk then let the weapon fly at him.

The boy cleverly ducked and fired almost at the same moment.

Down went the Sioux in a heap.

Crack—crack!

Twice more the brave boy fired, for he saw two of the others in the act of aiming at him with their guns.

"Run, Young Wild West! Run!" screamed Silver Stream. "They dare not shoot you. I will not let them!"

Then she turned upon the braves furiously and ordered them to let the boy alone.

They were checked temporarily, and, not wishing to be caught, Wild started from the spot.

But two of the braves had seen fit to run around behind him before the squaw had commanded them to let

him go, and, disregarding what she said, they pounced upon the young deadshot and bore him to the ground.

The revolver was knocked from his grasp and a kick from one of the redskins dazed him completely.

He struggled to free himself as soon as he realized what was up, but it was useless.

Crack—crack—crack!

Half a dozen of the redskins were now after Charlie and Poker Jack, who were letting them know that it was extremely dangerous for them to come too close.

Meanwhile Silver Stream was doing her level best to make those who had the boy, and were binding him hand and foot, to let him go.

But they absolutely refused to take any orders from her, they no doubt knowing it would be against the wishes of the chief.

"Never mind, Silver Stream," said Wild, coolly, as he saw how useless it was for her to interfere in his behalf. "I'll get away all right. Take it easy. Wait till your father comes back."

The squaw's eyes brightened like stars when she heard him speak her name.

Wild knew it would have effect on her, for had he not heard her say that she loved him?

It was only natural that he should use what he knew to save his life, though he did not mean for an instant to make her think that he thought anything of her.

As he was picked up and carried close to the blazing logs he could hear shooting in the distance, which told him that Charlie and the cowboy were being hotly pursued.

But he did not fear much for them, since they had a good start, and if they were not cut off by the rest of the band, as they came back, they ought to reach the camp all right.

"I hope they get there," he thought. "If they do they will be able to hold the camp against the redskins, for they will not all go to attack it at one time, anyhow. If they do I will have a sure chance to get away, for that squaw will do about anything for me, I think."

Silver Stream came near him, and as one of the braves picked up a blazing stick and put it toward the boy's face, to give him a taste of what they thought would come a little later, she struck it from his hand.

"Don't harm a hair in his head!" she cried, in her own language, which Wild understood quite well. "If you do I will kill you! I am the chief's daughter, and I am in command when he is away."

This caused the redskin to desist, though it was evident that he did not fear her greatly.

The same two who had been guarding the White Girl Captive were now in charge of her, and the situation was much worse than before for her, it seemed.

But Young Wild West was not much alarmed.

"If that squaw is not able to save me I'll miss my guess, that's all!" he thought to himself.

CHAPTER XI.

THE SIOUX LOSE IN A HOT SKIRMISH.

Cheyenne Charlie had not turned and fled until he saw that there was absolutely no chance to save Wild.

But he knew pretty well that, since the young squaw

had interfered in his behalf, the boy was not in any great danger.

He ran with the cowboy, and every time the redskins fired at them he turned and let a couple of shots go at them, generally with great effect, too.

He had a rifle, and he knew how to handle it, too.

Poker Jack had Wild's rifle, since the boy had not deemed it wise to take it with him when he went to free the girl captive, and he, too, did some telling work.

Before they were half way to the camp they had dropped five of the pursuing Sioux, and this meant a whole lot to them, since it made the rest more cautious.

It was a running fight nearly all the way.

But just before the camp was reached the two managed to throw the redskins off their track, and then they stole alone in silence and finally reached the camp.

Jim and the girls were waiting behind the rocks that were clustered about the retreat they had taken possession of, their rifles ready to deal out lead when the redskins came in view.

Charlie waved his hand for them to keep quiet, and they did so.

"Where's Wild?" Arietta asked, anxiously, when she saw he was not fetching up in the rear.

"Ther Injuns has got him," answered the scout. "But it's all right, I reckon. There's a squaw there what's in love with him, an' she ain't goin' ter see him hurt."

"A squaw in love with him!" Arietta echoed.

"Yes; I'll tell yer all about it as soon as I catch my breath. Jim, jest be on ther lookout, will yer? There'll be about thirty redskins here afore we know it!"

Poker Jack was warmly welcomed, though there was a gloom over the camp on account of the mishap to Wild.

The scout had just about related the circumstances of the case when the redskins came in sight.

"Give it to 'em; it's ther only way!" he exclaimed.

Then he opened fire on the Sioux, who were right before them.

The rest joined in the firing, and half a dozen of them fell before they could get to cover.

"I reckon that sorter took ther starch out of 'em," remarked Poker Jack, nodding his approval. "Jest let 'em keep it up! Then it'll be all ther easier ter save Wild an' ther gal."

"Well, if the squaw promised to save your sweetheart, as you say you heard her cry out to Wild, and she is in love with Wild, I rather think that they both stand a pretty good show," Arietta answered. "I am not a bit jealous of the squaw, though I don't understand how it is that she came to fall in love with him."

"He don't, either, nor do any of us, I reckon," said Charlie. "But look out, there! Here comes some more of ther red varmints. It's ther gang we sent on a wild goose chase. Steady there, Jack! Don't yer pull till you've got yer man covered!"

Crang!

The scout's weapon spoke with a report that echoed through the opening in the mountainside.

Cra—a—ck!

The girls joined in the firing, and for the next two minutes there was a regular fusillade pouring into the ranks of the advancing Sioux.

They answered the fire, of course, but our friends were so well protected by the rocks that they were not harmed in the least.

As the horses were further back along the foot of the cliff, the Indians could not get in view of them, so they were spared being shot.

There was no doubt but that the red fiends would have opened fire on the horses had they but had the chance, for they would have considered the palefaces more sure of falling into their hands then.

But our friends had chosen well when they took the place they were located in.

The Sioux did not attempt to get to them again, but withdrew out of sight, leaving their dead and dying where they fell.

"I reckon there's quite a good ways from forty of 'em now, Jack," said the scout, when he found that the danger was over for the present. "Jest look out there!"

The cowboy nodded as he saw the bodies lying about.

"A dozen of 'em, if there's one!" he exclaimed. "This beats anything I ever had in ther line of fightin' redskins. I'll be mighty glad when it's over."

"Well, it won't be over to-day, it ain't likely. We won't dare ter venture away from here so long as it's light, that's certain. It are a putty sure thing that some of 'em will stay around ter watch us, an' ther first chance they git they'll let us have it. We'll have ter wait till it gits dark afore we try ter do anything fur Wild an' ther gal. It may be that they both show up afore that time, fur if Silver Stream, as ther name of the squaw is, has pull enough with ther old chief she'll git 'em clear. She's Spotted Wolf's darter, an' I sorter reckon that he'll listen ter her somewhat."

"Not in a case of this kind, I'm afraid," answered the cowboy. "She may keep 'em from hurtin' Wild or Susie; but she won't be able ter make him let 'em go free. That would spile all his chances of gittin' pardoned. Spotted Wolf won't let Susie go, nohow. You kin bet on that!"

"That's about the size of it," Jim spoke up. "I reckon we'll have to wait till dark, and then strike out and do something, Charlie."

"Me go, too, so be," chimed in Hop, who had been taking in all that had been said. "Me allee samee helpee savee Misler Wild."

"All right, Hop," Charlie replied. "I reckon it won't be ther first time you've helped out in cases like this. Wild has got ter be got away from ther red galoots afore they take a notion ter kill him. There ain't no use in sayin' anything different!"

"If he isn't here by the time you have gone half an hour I will go to look for him myself," said Arietta. "The Sioux band will either have another White Girl Captive, or I will get Wild free!"

"That's ther way ter talk, Arietta," the scout hastened to say. "You kin do your part, all right, an' I knows it."

Poker Jack looked at her, admiringly.

"I like ter see a gal with plenty of spunk in 'em," he said. "You remind me a whole lot of Susie, only she can't shoot as straight as you kin."

"I'll show the redskins just how straight I can shoot if I have any trouble with them," the brave girl declared.

By this time the afternoon had pretty well worn itself away.

Night was coming on, and they were all glad of it, for under the cover of darkness something could be done to save Wild.

Though the sun was still shining, it was not with the usual degree of brightness, and the air was growing steadily colder.

No one knew better than Cheyenne Charlie what might be expected.

It was going to snow.

In the part of the country where our friends were snowstorms come early in the season, and are apt to come in a hurry, too.

If a heavy fall of snow should come now they would be in a pretty bad plight, since they would not be able to get down the mountainside to the trail, even.

The treacherous parts of the way would be hidden by the snow, and this meant almost certain death, or serious mishap for any one who tried to go down, they not being fully familiar with the route.

As the sun neared the line of the western horizon it became lost behind a bank of light-gray clouds.

The bank then spread until the whole sky was obscured, and the cold increased.

"It's a lucky thing we got in plenty of wood," said the scout. "I reckon we'll need it afore mornin'."

"Me allee samee keepee um fire go velly muchee, the cook remarked. "Me likee nicee warm fire when um velly muchee cold."

"Who don't, yer foolish galoot?" Charlie answered, looking at Wing in disgust.

The Indians had not showed themselves since they went away, and this was a little encouraging.

But it would hardly be safe for any of them to venture out while the daylight lasted, so they decided to stick to what they had first agreed upon, which was to wait until darkness, and then Charlie and Jim would strike out and see what they could do.

If Hop wanted to go he could, as Charlie had said.

Our friends had little to say as they waited.

With Wild missing there was a gloom over the camp.

But when it was time for the supper to be cooked Charlie bade Wing get at it, while he guarded the approach of the redskins, who might see the Chinaman at work and think it was a good chance to fire a volley at him.

The bear meat they had brought up the mountain was thoroughly cold now, so when the scout hinted that he would like some of it for his supper Wing lost no time in cutting off some slices.

In a little while the odor of broiling bear meat and coffee became wafted on the breeze, and it made a combination that would have been very agreeable to a hungry person if one had come along just then.

In spite of the fact that Wild was missing, they all ate quite heartily.

But they knew it was necessary to eat if they wished to keep themselves in proper shape.

Just as the meal was finished a few flakes of snow were seen falling.

"She's comin'!" exclaimed the scout. "But never mind.

Ther snow will help us ter git Wild, I reckon. Come on, Jim! Are yer ready?"

"Yes, Charlie," was the reply. "I reckon it is dark enough, so we will go now."

"Me go, too, so be," spoke up Hop, who was quite ready.

CHAPTER XII.

WHAT SILVER STREAM DID.

Wild was kept lying on the ground close to the fire for a rather long time.

Silver Stream had taken her position near the captive girl, and she remained there, her eyes fixed upon the helpless young deadshot the biggest part of the time.

It was evident that the squaw had been forced to submit to the rulings of the brave who was in charge while the chief was away.

They all heard the shooting as Charlie and the cowboy made their escape, but after that all was in silence.

But finally the chief came in with all his surviving braves but two, and they had been left to watch the camp of the palefaces.

Spotted Wolf had lost heavily that afternoon, and there was a worried look in his eyes as he came into the camp.

It had been his orders to tie the white captive to the tree, and when he saw that she was still there his face brightened a little.

But when his attention was called to the prisoner lying by the fire he uttered an exclamation of joy.

"It is Young Wild West!" he cried, as he leaned over and took a good look. "Spotted Wolf knows the paleface boy. Ugh! Me feel fine! Young Wild West will die in the fire when the darkness comes. His flesh and bones will help kindle the flame that lights up the night. The paleface must die, if Spotted Wolf gets a rope around his neck for it. The chief has spoken."

Then he gave the helpless boy a spiteful kick.

At this Silver Stream strode before her father, her eyes blazing with indignation.

"My father must not strike the paleface boy when he cannot help himself!" she said. "Silver Stream loves her father, and she has obeyed him in everything, but if he harms one hair in the head of Young Wild West she will turn against him. She will no longer call the great Sioux chief her father."

Spotted Wolf looked at her in amazement.

This was entirely unexpected to him, and he could not quite understand it.

"Silver Stream is crazy!" he finally blurted out. "She had better go to her tepee."

"Silver Stream is not crazy," was the reply. "She means just what she said. Young Wild West must not be harmed!"

"The paleface boy will die before another sun, Silver Stream. You go to your tepee!"

But the Indian maiden laughed scornfully.

"I will not go until my father promises me that he will not harm Young Wild West!" she said.

The chief turned to two of his braves and uttered a command.

The next minute the girl was seized by the two redskins.

But they were not going to carry out the orders of Spotted Wolf very easily.

Silver Stream was not used to that kind of treatment, and she was not going to submit to it, either.

Tearing herself free from the redskins, she pulled a gleaming knife from her belt and struck the nearest one on the arm.

The brave uttered a howl of pain and sprang back out of the way.

The other respected the knife to the extent that he, too, got out of the way.

Then it was that Spotted Wolf leaped toward the girl, as though to strike her to the ground.

She did not flinch, however, and stood with the knife clenched in her hand, as though she meant to use it, even on her own father, in case she deemed it necessary.

The girl's manner awed the chief not a little.

It was the first time she had refused to obey him, much more to openly defy him, and he could not comprehend it.

But he gradually gave in to her, much to the surprise of his braves.

"Silver Stream is crazy," he said, turning to them. "She will come to her senses by and by."

"I will watch the paleface brave," the squaw declared, not noticing his remark.

Then she stooped and cut the rope that was tied about the ankles of our hero.

One of the Indians made a move to stop her, but a menace with the knife caused him to change his mind.

Taking Wild by the arm, the chief's daughter assisted him to his feet.

Then she conducted him to a tree that was almost at the very entrance to the tepee she occupied with the White Girl Captive of the Sioux.

The redskins watched every move she made, and when they saw her proceed to bind the boy to the tree they looked a bit relieved.

Silver Stream made a thorough job of the tying process, and without the aid of some one Wild could not hope to get loose.

Having done this, the Indian maiden walked over to where Susie Morse was bound to the tree and quickly cut her loose.

Then she led her to the tepee and both went inside.

Wild was much pleased at what had taken place.

He saw in it the ultimate release of himself and the white girl.

But he did not act as though he was hopeful, as he did not want the Sioux to think anything like that.

The squaw had said he should not be harmed, and he was willing to stake his life on her word just then.

The tree to which the squaw had tied him was not very far from the fire, and as the tepee shut off the cold wind

from the north from him, he was not very uncomfortable.

It was not long before Silver Stream came from the tepee, however, and she had a big, warm blanket with her.

"Young Wild West can sit down and keep himself warm," she said, smiling at him. "Silver Stream will fix it so he will not suffer."

"All right," Wild answered, nodding in a pleased way. "I hope you don't get into trouble for this."

"Silver Stream does not fear trouble. Spotted Wolf will now do as she says. Young Wild West will not be harmed."

"Well, I would like to get away from here, Silver Stream. How about it?"

"Young Wild West must not ask questions," was the quick reply. "He has heard what Silver Stream has said."

"All right. I'll quit, then."

Our hero did not want to lead her on and make her think that he cared anything for her, so he decided not to say anything more.

The afternoon soon passed.

Snow was coming, and Wild saw the redskins making preparations for it.

That they did not much like the idea of it was evident, for the braves had very little in the way of shelter.

Several of them began cutting cedars, which they put together in the form of a pyramid and formed a big tepee or lodge.

There were but twenty-five of them now, and that made it easier to arrange accommodations for them.

When night fell all the cedars in the vicinity had been cut and put to use, and there was now a big pile of them close to the blazing fire.

As Wild looked at them it occurred to him that they would make a big blaze and warm up things if they once got started.

"Charlie and Jim will be along pretty soon," he muttered, as the snow flakes began to fall. "Then something will happen. I expect to stop in our own camp to-night, and the White Girl Captive will, too. That is about the way I figure it out, anyhow."

The darkness deepened and the snow fell faster.

It was getting to be decidedly uncomfortable where the boy was now, and just as he was going to call out to Silver Stream to supply him with another blanket, so he might shield himself from the storm, she came out with a big buffalo skin.

This she put over the boy so it entirely concealed his form.

And as she adjusted it about him she cleverly cut the ropes that bound him and left the knife at his side.

Wild felt a thrill of exultation.

He knew now that the time was coming quickly when he would have a chance to escape.

But the Indians were keeping a close watch on him, and he knew it.

This made him think that he would have to bide his time and wait for the proper moment.

Meanwhile Silver Stream went back into the tepee and told Susie what she had done.

"Will it be safe for you to remain here if Young Wild

West escapes?" she asked. "Your father and his braves will surely know that you did it."

"Silver Stream will go, too. The paleface maiden will go with her, and they will go to the camp of Young Wild West. Silver Stream will no longer stay with her father, who has made war on the palefaces!"

This was music in the ears of the fair captive.

At last she was to be free!

She could scarcely believe it true, but when she looked into the eyes of the squaw in the light cast out by the blazing fire a short distance away, she saw that there was naught but sincerity and truthfulness there.

CHAPTER XIII.

HOP WAH IS CAPTURED.

The ground was pretty well covered when Cheyenne Charlie, Jim Dart and Hop Wah reached the vicinity of the Sioux camp.

They had successfully eluded the two redskins who had been left to watch the camp, as the falling snow had aided them.

As they finally came in sight of the Indian camp and saw the big bunch of cedars that had been erected to form a shelter for the braves, the scout gave a nod of satisfaction.

"I reckon ther red galoots don't like this very much," he observed in a whisper to Jim. "Now, then, let's find where Wild is."

"That looks like some one covered with a skin, over there by the tepee," Dart answered, pointing to the spot.

"It does, that's a fact. But whether it kin be him or not, I ain't jest prepared to say. Howsumever, I'll find out mighty quick."

The snow was coming down so fast that objects could not be seen with any degree of clearness, so they all ventured around and got up close to the tepee the two maidens were occupying.

The Sioux seemed to feel perfectly safe from being disturbed, and this was probably because they knew there were two of their number watching the camp of the palefaces.

"I reckon this is goin' ter be putty easy, by ther looks of things, Jim," the scout whispered. "Jest stay right here an' I'll creep up to that there tree an' see what's there."

As Charlie moved over to carry out his intention Hop pulled something from his pocket.

"Me makee allee samee biggee bang!" he explained in a whisper to Jim. "When um ledskins finde lat Misler Wild allee samee gittee 'way me makee biggee fireclacker go off. Allee samee set um cedar tlees on fire an' makee nicee lillee blaze."

"All right, Hop. But maybe you won't have to do anything like that. The redskins are shivering about the fire, and they don't think there is anything likely to happen just now. If Charlie can get Wild free it will be all right."

Charlie was rapidly nearing the tree now.

The closer he got to it the more he became convinced that there was a human being sitting at the foot of it, covered with a big skin.

Just as he got within ten feet of it he saw the skin move, and then a pair of feet were pushed behind the tree.

The scout paused and watched.

Slowly but surely a human form came from under the buffalo skin, leaving it almost in the exact shape it had been in since Silver Stream had placed it over our hero.

"It's Wild, as sure as guns!" exclaimed Charlie, under his breath.

Of course it was, as the reader knows.

The young deadshot had decided to try to make his escape just as the scout was creeping up to look for him.

As he succeeded in getting behind the tree Charlie whispered:

"I'm right here, Wild!"

"Good!" came the reply. "Now to save the girl and light out for the camp."

Pausing long enough to give the hand of the scout a hearty grip, our hero started to get around to the rear of the tepee.

Charlie followed him, ready to shoot at the least sign of danger.

Reaching the back of the tepee, our hero did not hesitate to cut a slit in the skins it was constructed of.

Another slash and he had a V-shaped opening.

He thrust in his head and found both inmates looking straight at him.

"Come," he said in a whisper, addressing the white captive. "It is about time you changed your quarters, I reckon."

"Silver Stream will go, too," answered the squaw, before Susie could find words to make a reply.

There was no other way out of it, so our hero simply said:

"All right. Come on! Now is the time."

The captive came out first, and then Silver Stream followed.

But they were not to have as smooth sailing as they thought, for at that moment Spotted Wolf came out of his tepee and stalked to the tree where he thought Young Wild West was a prisoner.

Just what his idea in doing this was no one knew; but it might have been that he wanted to hold a little conversation with the young deadshot.

The chief stalked to the tree and gave the buffalo skin a kick.

Then he said, in guttural tones:

"Young Wild West can get ready to die! If Silver Stream says no she will die, too! Spotted Wolf has spoken."

This was plainly heard by our friends and every one else in the camp.

Wild took the captive girl by the arm and led her from the spot.

Charlie and Silver Stream followed.

But they could see the chief bending over the buffalo skin as they left, and the next minute a cry of rage escaped his lips.

Pulling a hatchet from his belt, he sprang to the tepee and threw open the flap.

A single glance sufficed to show him that it was empty.

Then it was that the warwhoop of the Sioux left his lips and the camp was roused and ready for action.

Hop Wah, waiting with Jim Dart, concluded it high time to act now.

He quickly struck a match and lighted the fuse that was attached to the oblong object he held in his hand.

Jim saw Wild and Charlie making off with the two girls, and he lost no time in running after them.

Hop let the explosive go right into the midst of the pile of cedars, and then he turned to flee.

But just then he tripped and fell heavily to the ground, the fall stunning him temporarily.

Bang!

There was a loud explosion and the cedars were scattered.

This put the redskins in a panic, and they ran hither and thither, not knowing just what to do.

It was fully a minute before the clever Chinaman recovered sufficiently to rise to his feet.

But when he did get up he was seized almost immediately by one of the braves who happened to run that way.

"Hip hi!" yelled the Chinaman. "Help, Misler Wild! Me allee samee gittee catchee!"

The Sioux caught him by the throat and choked him to silence.

A sharp call from him brought others there, and then Hop was carried bodily to the light of the fire.

Some of the cedars had been blown into the fire and they were now blazing away at a terrific pace.

Hop did not struggle, for experience had taught him that it was useless in such cases.

All but half a dozen of the Sioux had now started in pursuit of the escaping captives.

The chief was one of those who had gone.

The fact that they had caught a Chinaman made the braves think less of it.

A Chinaman did not amount to much as a foe, in their estimation.

But it was really a wonder that they did not kill him outright when they first got hold of him.

However, it was possible that because the chief had gone in pursuit of those who had escaped they meant to wait and let him pass judgment on the prisoner.

Evidently they did not think it worth while to bind the Celestial, for they simply forced him to the ground in front of the tepee of Spotted Wolf, and while the rest of those who had remained strove to extinguish the flaming cedars two sat down to guard him.

Then it was that Hop resorted to his old way of fooling redskins.

"Velly muchee fire, so be," he remarked, forcing a smile and looking at those who were guarding him.

The two braves seemed surprised when they heard him say this, and they looked at him sharply.

"Velly muchee fire," repeated the clever Chinaman. "Makee feel allee samee goodee in um cold snow, so be."

"Ugh!" grunted one of the braves.

"You havee lillie smoke?"

If they had been surprised before, the two Sioux braves were astonished now, for Hop coolly pulled out three black-looking cigars, tendering them each one and placing the other in his mouth.

It was hard to refuse the cigars, so the Indians took them.

They were not in the habit of getting cigars to smoke, though they liked them very well.

It so happened that the chief had about all the tobacco there was in the camp, too, and this made them more eager to get a chance to enjoy a smoke.

Hop lighted a match and applied it to his own cigar as coolly as though he was but the guest of a very friendly band of redskins.

Then he invited them to accept a light, which they did.

"Velly cold," he said, as he drew his coat tightly about him, and adjusted his queue, so it would not fall down. "Chinee man likee um ledskins; he no likee Young Wild West. Me lun away flom um paleface camp and comee to see um gleat blaves in campee of um ledskins. Palefaces takee all um money flom poor Chinee. Me no gittee nothing."

The Indians acted as though they did not know whether to believe this or not. But Hop acted his part so well that they were forced to believe that he really had deserted the camp of the palefaces and had come to join them.

"Me no likee shootee," he went on. "Me flaid um ledskins comee and shootee poor Chinee, so me comee here. Me wantee stay with um gleat chief, Spottee Wolf, allee samee."

"Chinee heap much wise," ventured one of the redskins, nodding his head.

"Poor Chinee know velly little, so be," answered Hop, shaking his head.

It happened that the cigars were pretty good ones, and the more his guards puffed at them the better they liked Hop.

But they were to find out their mistake before very long.

CHAPTER XIV.

WILD AND CHARLIE GO IN SEARCH OF HOP.

The explosion had caused havoc among the Indians and enabled Young Wild West and Cheyenne Charlie to get a good start, and they hurried the two girls along with them at a rapid pace.

The result was that, though a few shots were fired at them, they managed to elude the Sioux, and in a little while they reached the camp.

The snow had been coming down so fast that it was now nearly three inches deep, and if it kept on all night it would be impossible to leave the spot, even if they were not compelled to remain there by the Indians.

Both Wild and Charlie knew that Hop had fallen into the hands of the Sioux, for they had heard his shout for help.

But they had no chance to save him, so they left him for the time being.

"I reckon he'll make out all right, if they don't keep him there till ther snow gits so deep that he can't find his way here," Charlie observed.

"Don't keep him there!" echoed Poker Jack, who was holding fast to his rescued sweetheart, as though he was afraid she might be taken from him again. "Yer don't think they're goin' ter let him go, do yer, Charlie?"

"They'll have ter. Hop will see ter that. He ain't ther galoot as stays in an Injun camp very long. If they only don't tie him up he'll git away all right, see if he don't!"

Crack!

Just then a shot sounded and a bullet whizzed over the heads of the cowboy and his sweetheart, who were partly exposed to the view of the waiting Indians.

They both got down behind the rocks in a hurry.

"I reckon that was a mighty close call," declared Jack. "If it wasn't snowin' so hard ther chances is that ther bullet would have hit one of us. Jest keep your head low, Susie."

"And you, too, Jack," was the reply.

"Oh, I'm all right. It's you what has got ter be careful. You've been through enough ter last yer ther rest of your lifetime now, an' we want ter git back to your father's ranch an' have ther weddin' over with."

Silver Stream was sitting close to Anna and Eloise, and as she listened to this conversation her eyes grew misty.

"It very nice to be loved," she ventured, looking at the girls and forcing a smile.

"Yes," answered Anna, gazing fondly at her stalwart husband. "I suppose there is some one among your people who loves you?"

"Silver Stream no cares for her people," was the quick retort.

Anna saw that she had made a mistake, so she said no more.

She now went over to where Arietta was crouching, a rifle in her hands.

After an interval of about ten minutes a volley was fired and the bullets flattened against the rocks.

Charlie and Poker Jack fired where the flashes came from, but there was nothing heard to indicate that they had been any more successful than had the redskins.

The snow continued to fall, and, to make it worse, a strong wind came up, causing it to drift.

Wild began to grow uneasy about Hop, not so much as to his being in danger of being slain by the Indians as to the possibility of his making his escape and getting lost in the snow.

"Boys," said he, leaning over to where Charlie and Jim were sitting, "I reckon a couple of us had better go and look for Hop."

"I'll go with yer, Wild," the scout answered, quickly. "I don't want nothin' ter happen ter ther Chinees. He's got too many good points about him fur that."

"All right. We'll go then. It is a shame to leave him there. And, another thing, he might get away from them and then lose his way in the snow. Come on. I reckon we can get past the redskins all right."

The two quickly got ready to leave.

Silver Stream watched our hero as he spoke to his sweetheart before going and her eyes fell.

She evidently knew there was no possible chance for her to win the affections of the dashing young paleface, but she was not one of the kind to resort to anything that suggested revenge upon the one she might have termed her rival.

Wild and Charlie had not been gone long when she arose and wrapped her blanket about her.

"Silver Stream will go to help Young Wild West save the Chinees," she said.

"No," spoke up Arietta, taking her gently by the arm. "You stay here, Silver Stream. If Young Wild West don't come back in an hour then you can go look for him, and I will go with you."

The squaw looked at the girl in astonishment.

"You are not afraid to go out in the snow and go to the camp of Spotted Wolf?" she asked.

"No, I am not afraid," Arietta replied.

Silver Stream sat down.

"I will do as the paleface maiden says," she said.

But let us follow our hero and the scout.

The two used the greatest of caution in leaving the camp, for they knew that the redskins were gathered near at hand and that they were watching closely.

But it was comparatively easy for the two to fool them, since the snow was a great help to them.

They got past the redskins and then proceeded on their way to the Sioux camp, pausing now and then to listen.

They had barely come in sight of it when they heard the braves who had pursued them to the camp coming back.

This spoiled Wild's plans somewhat, since he would have more to contend with.

But he never once thought of giving up.

Hop must be saved.

That was the whole thing in a nutshell.

Creeping up close to the tepee that had been left vacant by the White Girl Captive and Silver Stream, they got down behind a clump of bushes and waited.

The drifting snow had about covered their tracks, so there was no danger of them being tracked to the spot.

It was now getting bitter cold, and it was anything but a pleasant prospect they had before them.

But Wild and Charlie were used to hardships, so they did not mind it half as much as the average person would have.

They took a look at the scene before them.

The Indians had managed to extinguish the burning cedars, and some of them were putting them in shape again, so they would afford them shelter from the storm.

Hop was sitting close to the big fire, a brave on either side of him, and all three were smoking cigars.

This sight caused the scout to chuckle.

"Ther heathen galoot has got 'em dead ter rights, Wild," he whispered.

"Yes, but wait. The chief is coming. He will be the one he will have to deal with," was the reply.

Spotted Wolf walked up, followed by his braves.

He had brought them all back with him, having abandoned the idea of fighting the palefaces for the present.

The old chief appeared much dejected, and there was good reason for it.

He had met with a serious loss, and had not only lost his captives, but his own daughter as well.

It was about time for him to wish himself out of it.

When he saw the Chinaman sitting before the fire in such a contented way Spotted Wolf was amazed.

"Ugh!" he exclaimed, putting on a fierce look. "What yellow-faced dog do here?"

One of the guards quickly explained in his own tongue the version of his visit to the camp Hop had given him, and then the chief was not a little puzzled.

The contented air of the Chinaman was what puzzled him the most.

But he was in a rather savage frame of mind, as might be supposed, and very desirous of wreaking vengeance on some one.

"Chinee heap much fool!" he exclaimed, and then he gave Hop a pretty sound kick.

Wild and Charlie saw this, but they could not hear what was said, owing to the howling of the wind.

Hop got up, and, putting out his hand to the chief, exclaimed:

"Me velly muchee glad to meet um gleat chief, so be. Havee lillee dlink, Misler Spotted Wolf?"

Out camp a small flask that contained just about a good drink of liquor.

How Hop had managed to keep it was a mystery, for he liked tanglefoot so much that he would drink it whenever he could get it.

Possibly he had thought that it might be a long time before he got any more, so he had saved the little that he now tendered to the Sioux chief.

Spotted Wolf took the flask, uncorked it and placed it to his nose.

Then the vestige of a smile crossed his painted visage, and, tipping the flask, he quickly gulped down the contents.

The two braves looked dismayed when they saw this, for it was evident that they would have swallowed the whisky if they had known it was on the person of the Chinaman.

But it was far better that Hop had saved it until now, for the drink had the effect of greatly softening the feelings of Spotted Wolf.

"Chinee heap much smart; bring firewater to Spotted Wolf," he said.

"Me allee samee velly muchee smartee, so be," Hop answered.

CHAPTER XV.

SILVER STREAM GOES BACK TO HER PEOPLE.

Wild and Charlie moved around so they were directly back of the tepee of the chief.

It was just then that Spotted Wolf took the Chinaman by the arm and conducted him inside.

Our two friends got right close to the tepee and listened.

"Chinee got some more firewater?" the chief asked.

"No; me likee havee, for me feel velly muchee likee takee lillee dlink," was the truthful reply.

"Spotted Wolf look and find out."

Then the chief proceeded to search him.

He found several things that were puzzles to him, but there was no more whisky.

While he was looking over some of the articles he had taken from the Chinaman's pockets Wild was busy cutting a slit in the tepee.

Our hero had decided upon a daring plan of action.

He meant to subdue the chief and take Hop out of the opening he was making in the tepee.

The howling of the storm aided him greatly in doing this, for the sound of the knife could not be heard above it, and in less than a minute he had cut a huge V in the skin of the tepee.

All he had to do now was to lift it and take the old Sioux by surprise.

Spotted Wolf was handling a peculiar-looking object, which was no other than a powerful explosive that was of Hop's own manufacture, when a revolver was suddenly thrust right under his nose.

"Make just one little sound, Spotted Wolf, and you will be a dead redskin!" exclaimed Wild.

The chief gave a gasp, but it was not loud enough to be heard by his braves outside, so Wild did not shoot.

"Hold up your hands!" he commanded, in a low, but impressive tone of voice.

There was no getting out of it, for the villainous Sioux leader recognized the face of his hated enemy, Young Wild West, and he was not going to take any chances.

Up went his hands.

"Take his weapons, Hop," said the young deadshot, coolly.

"Allee light, Misler Wild," and, smiling blandly at the chief, whom he had managed to deceive so easily, the Chinaman relieved him of his weapons.

"Now, tie him up with his own rope, Hop."

"Allee light, Misler Wild."

The Celestial seemed to be delighted to do it, and there was no doubt but that he was, too.

In a very short time he had him as helpless as a newborn babe.

"Now, stuff something in his mouth and tie it there, Hop. We don't want him to be able to give the alarm until we get well away from here."

This was done, too, and then Hop coolly gathered up his belongings.

"Come on out," said Wild, and he did so.

"I reckon that's what yer kin call putty good," said the scout, as they hurried around the camp through the blinding snow.

They heard nothing as they went, and when they had reached a safe distance they concluded that Hop had made a good job of it when he bound and gagged the old chief.

They reached the camp much sooner than those waiting for them expected they would, and then there was a little rejoicing.

But there was one there who did not seem to be happy.

It was Silver Stream.

"I am glad, Young Wild West," she said, after they

had talked it all over and the release of Hop had been related.

"You are glad, Silver Stream?" our hero asked her, as he looked at her curiously. "What are you glad about?"

"I am glad that you are happy," she answered. "Now I will go back to my people."

"You had better wait until morning," Wild said, shaking his head.

She persisted in going, so they allowed her to depart. The long night slipped by, and the snow continued to fall until near dawn.

Then the wind shifted, and the storm was over for the time being.

The sun came out and shone upon the glittering whiteness that was all around them.

It might have been called a beautiful sight, but our friends did not consider it such.

Young Wild West knew that the beating he had already administered would not suffice to quell the murderous, old Sioux chief.

"Now, then," he said, when he saw that the work of preparing the breakfast was well under way, "Jim, I reckon you have got to take a little climb up that tree. There is not much snow on the branches, since the wind blew it off as fast as it struck. It won't be such a hard task, so go ahead as soon as you like."

"I'm ready now, Wild," was the reply. "I need a little exercise to work up an appetite for the tough bear meat we are going to have for breakfast."

He glanced at the scout as he said this, for Jim knew how partial Charlie was to bear meat, whether it was really tough or only a little bit that way.

"Never mind about that, Jim," was the retort. "I reckon you always eat your share, all right. It don't make no difference whether it's bear or venison, you've generally got a rousin' old appetite. Yer don't need no particular exercise fur ter make it, either."

Charlie knew pretty well what he was talking about, so there was a laugh at Jim's expense.

But the boy went over to the tree and was soon going up it.

Reaching the top, he turned his gaze in the direction of the Indian camp, which he could easily see over the top of the ridge, the tree being much higher.

About the only thing he could see was that the Sioux had a rousing fire going, for none of them seemed to be stirring.

But as he took a close look he distinguished the form of Silver Stream standing in front of her tepee.

"Well," the old chief did not get mad enough at her to kill her, anyhow," he thought, as he started to descend the tree.

He quickly reported to Wild and the rest, and when they all heard that the squaw was there they felt better satisfied.

Breakfast was soon cooked, and they sat down and ate.

Wild grew a little uneasy when Jim had ascended the tree again after breakfast and reported that there was nothing on the move at the camp of Spotted Wolf.

"You can bet he has got one of his braves watching

us, and as soon as we start to leave they will be after us!" he said.

CHAPTER XVI.

CONCLUSION.

The rest were of the same opinion as our hero, of course.

"There's only one way ter do, as I kin see," said Cheyenne Charlie, shrugging his shoulders.

"What is that, Charlie?" queried Poker Jack, anxiously.

"We've got ter lick ther measly coyotes so bad that they won't fight any more afore we start ter leave here," was the reply.

"That seems to be the only way," Wild observed. "But I hope we won't have to do it, because that squaw is among them, and she is just as apt to get shot as any of the rest."

"Our lives is worth as much as hers, I reckon," the scout declared.

This was true enough, as they all knew.

"Maybe we can draw them this way," our hero said, after he had thought for a minute or two. "If we can do that we might be able to thin them out enough to answer the purpose. But I am afraid old Spotted Wolf will never be caught and hanged for his many crimes, though."

"How is that?" queried the cowboy, looking at him wonderingly.

"Well, he will have to die, that's all. If he gets shot the rest will be easy to conquer. The old chief is the brains of the band, and once he is gone they won't know which way to turn."

"All right!" exclaimed the scout, nodding and smiling grimly. "I guess I know what ter do now!"

In a few minutes it was decided that they would leave the girls at the camp with the two Chinamen, and the rest go out and try to draw the Indians into making an attack.

They soon left the camp, picking their way along to avoid the drifts, and in a little while they came in sight of the redskins.

"Now, boys, just let out a good, old-fashioned yell to wake them up," said our hero.

"Whoopee! Whoopee! Wow! Wow! Yip, yip, yip!"

The cowboy yell echoed over the mountainside, and, hearing it, the Sioux braves leaped to their feet and seized their guns.

Crack—crack!

Two shots were fired at them at once, but our friends were thoughtful enough to get behind some trees in time to escape the bullets.

"Now, then, give it to them!" cried Young Wild West. The next instant his rifle spoke, and then all hands joined in.

About twenty of the Sioux had started to run for them, but before they had covered ten yards they were being thinned out so rapidly that the survivors beat a hasty retreat.

Charlie was looking for the old chief, for he had made

up his mind that he was the one he wanted to get a shot at, above all others.

But Spotted Wolf was lying pretty close.

He was not feeling very well that morning, anyhow, since he had laid in the tepee in the cold nearly two hours the night before, until one of his braves happened to discover his plight.

The appearance of the palefaces was rather unexpected to him, but he had ordered his braves to go after them and make short work of them.

The braves got very much the worst of it, and when one of them staggered back directly in front of his tepee and fell dead from a wound he had received, Spotted Wolf grew wild with rage.

Meanwhile his daughter was standing in front of her tepee, taking in what was going on in an indifferent way.

The chief saw her standing there, and he now called her to him.

"This is all your fault," he said to her in the language of the Sioux. "If the palefaces bring defeat on us I am going to kill you!"

"My father is a great chief. He is as brave as the winds of the deserted plains, and as strong as the mad bull that vanquishes all that comes before it; he will kill his own daughter! Let him do it, for Silver Stream is ready to die!"

The squaw had folded her arms, and she was standing before him, beautiful in her scathing defiance.

Spotted Wolf wilted before her.

"Go!" he exclaimed, savagely. "Silver Stream will leave her father forever. He no longer wants to look upon her face. She has learned to like the palefaces, and she must go to them. Go!"

The girl bowed her head, and then, without a word of reply, she went over to where the shivering horses were tethered and got her pony.

Then she mounted and rode away, not once turning her head.

At first she headed for Young Wild West and his friends, but she must have changed her mind, and the next minute our friends, who could not understand what she was leaving for, were astounded to see her riding straight for the brink of a yawning chasm.

Wild was quick to divine her intention.

"Hold on, Silver Stream!" he called out. "Don't ride that way. The first thing you know your pony will lose his footing and you will go to your death."

"Goodby, Young Wild West!" came the reply. "Silver Stream is going to the Happy Hunting Grounds. She loves, but is not loved!"

Wild started after her, followed by Jim.

Crack!

A sharp report rang out from the Indian camp and the pony staggered and fell.

It was Spotted Wolf who had fired the shot, for he, too, had realized the intentions of his daughter.

Wild and Jim were within easy range of him, and, seeing that he had shot the pony so easily, the chief sent a shot at our hero.

The bullet clipped a lock of hair from our hero's head as he was running to overtake the squaw.

Crang! Cheyenne Charlie got the opportunity he had

been waiting for, and Spotted Wolf threw up his hands and fell before his tepee.

Silver Stream had gained her feet just in time to see this, and, with a frenzied cry, she ran to the edge of the precipice and leaped over into the yawning depths below.

"That's the last of Silver Stream, I reckon," said Jim Dart, shaking his head, sadly.

"Yes," answered our hero. "Well, we couldn't help it. A squaw is a mighty peculiar person, I reckon. It is too bad, but it can't be helped."

They made their way back to the clump of trees, and just then the braves burst from their camp to avenge the death of their chief.

Crang! Crang! Cr—a—a—ng!

It was a galling fire that the four sent into the ranks of the redskins, and, their aim being true, and protected by the trees, as they were, there could be but one result.

They fell back, beaten to a finish!

"I reckon that will be about all," said Wild, coolly. "Now we'll go back to the camp and get ready to go on down, boys."

Back they went, feeling that there was no longer any danger.

But all were sorry for the poor squaw.

When they got back to the camp and told what had happened the girls actually cried.

Half an hour later they were making their way down the mountainside, and they heard the redskins coming after them.

When they came in sight a volley was fired at them, and that settled it for good. As they reached the ravine through which the trail ran, they were surprised to meet about fifty troopers riding up.

"You are too late, Captain," said Young Wild West, in his cool and easy way. "It is all over. The White Girl Captive of the Sioux has been saved, and her captor, old Spotted Wolf, is dead. We are much obliged to you for coming along in time to accompany us to the ranch belonging to the girl's father, however."

It is not necessary to describe how the ranch was reached, but suffice it to say that it was in due time.

Then Wild sent his compliments to the commander at the fort, together with a brief account of the rescue of the White Girl Captive.

Our friends remained at the ranch long enough to see Poker Jack and Susie Morse united in marriage, and then they set out for Cheyenne, so they could take the cars for a warmer climate as soon as possible.

THE END.

Read "YOUNG WILD WEST AND THE DISPUTED CLAIM; or, ARIETTA'S GOLDEN SHOWER," which will be the next number (285) of "Wild West Weekly."

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SOME GOOD ARTICLES.

Slag from furnaces is no longer an incumbrance to the smelter. It has been found useful in the manufacture of porcelain and bricks, it makes excellent building stones, and has proved its durability as a road-making material. Tiles and bottles can be made from it, and it is a component part of some cements. In the earlier days of coke-making the by-product gas, 8,000 cubic feet for each ton of coke, was lost. Forty billion cubic feet was wasted before it was made marketable. Gas from iron blast furnaces is now used to heat the furnaces, then burned, mixed with air. Ammonia is made from refuse from gas works, while America may some day be driven to the economy of Paris, where 2,200 tons of refuse are taken daily from the city cesspools to be made into ammonia. In the great economy of nature nothing should be lost, and from the refuse of a great city may come the ammonia that is a base for perfumes and toilet waters.

All the honey bees in this country having originally been imported from Europe or Asia, there is no racial difference between the wild ones and the domesticated; those that live in trees are simply the descendants of those that from time to time have taken "French leave" from their owners' hives and reverted to a state of nature. The vast bulk of the wild bees are of the German or black race, while the standard domesticated bee is the Italian; but that, however, is only because the Germans were the first to be introduced here. Just when the Germans came is in doubt, but it was some time in the seventeenth century; certainly it was not until near the close of the eighteenth century that any bees were found west of the Mississippi. The Indians used to say they could mark the advance of the white man by the appearance of bees in the woods. The Italian bees were first imported in 1860. Better tempered and more industrious than the Germans, they have become very popular with apiarists; but as many still keep the German bee, and others have the hybrid formed by the crossing of the two races, while countless Italians now have taken to the woods, there to breed more hybrids, it is clear that there is no sure way of distinguishing between the wild bee and the domesticated.

While the platinum recently found in the widely distributed black sands of California and Oregon is the most important substance contained in those deposits, promising soon to make this country the producer of the bulk of the world's supply of this indispensable and precious metal, examination of the sands in question has revealed paying quantities of a number of rare minerals, hitherto deemed worthless, which within

the last three or four years have become valuable. The black sands, indeed, are a wonderfully complex mixture. One of the substances they contain is monazite, the name of which, signifying the "lonely mineral," was bestowed because it is found nowhere in quantity, being represented only by an occasional crystal that turns up here or there. In it is held, as an impurity, the metal thorium, which is now in demand at a high price, being used to give a better color to incandescent mantels of gaslights. Another of the minerals is tantalite, which, like monazite, has been regarded until recently as valueless, save as a curiosity of the laboratory. It gets its name from the exceedingly tantalizing way in which the metal derived from it, tantalum, eluded the chemists who first tried to separate it from the ore. Tantalum, which is very hard, rust proof, and with an extremely high melting point, seems likely to replace carbon as a material for the filaments in incandescent electric lights. It can be drawn into wire as fine as a spider's web. Found also in the black sands is zircon, which is used in the manufacture of the incandescent cylinders for the Nernst glow light. Among other minerals they contain are columbite, olivine, and garnet, not to mention magnetic iron ore in large quantities. This iron is being substituted for carbon in the sticks of arc lights, burning one hundred and fifty hours, instead of a single night. It is destined to be utilized on an enormous scale for the manufacture of steel by electric smelting processes in the West, where fuel is costly, and electricity derivable from water power is cheap.

GRINS AND CHUCKLES.

"I tell you the dog does not belong to me." "Then why does he follow you?" "I don't know. You are following me, and you do not belong to me."

Bond—Say, Stock, I bet you a fiver you can't say the Lord's Prayer. Stock—Go you! "Now I lay me down to sleep," etc. Bond (astonished)—Well, here's your fiver—I didn't think you knew it.

Benedick—That luminous paint is a splendid invention. Singleton—What do you use it for? Benedick—We paint the baby's face so we can give him a drink in the night without lighting the gas.

"I was riding in a street car the other day," said a friend. "A boy began to laugh, and laughed so he couldn't stop. I told his mother that boy needed a spanking. She said she didn't believe in spanking him on a full stomach. I said: 'Neither do I; turn him over.'"

A lady farmer planted a garden. She was very proud of her prospective peas, but when her husband asked if they were ripe she said: "Oh, they haven't come up yet." "Haven't come up yet? Why, the season's nearly over." "Yes," she said, "but I planted canned peas; I think they come up a little late."

A young man in Washington, who many months ago hung up his shingle at "attorney-at-law," has not as yet been overwhelmed with clients. A friend, entering the office the other day, observed on the desk a cheap alarm clock. "Taking it home, eh?" he observed. "Good thing at this time of year. Everyone's liable to oversleep these spring mornings." The lawyer smiled. "I have not purchased that clock for the reason you mention. I keep it here to wake me when it's time to go home."

ON BANJO ISLAND.

By KIT CLYDE.

We were working up the Gulf of Bengal, after a long run from Liverpool, in a leaky and short-handed old brig called the Plover, when our water gave out to the last quart. We were hoisting out the last cask when some of the tackle broke, and it fell with a smash, and there we were, thirty miles to the west of the northernmost point of Sumatra, with hardly enough water aboard to dampen a man's tongue.

I am writing of the days before Plimsol and other British humanitarians entered the ring to fight for sailors' rights. We had come out deeply loaded, one man short, and with such grub as would breed a mutiny in twenty-four hours to-day.

I was chief mate of the Plover, and while I could not openly sympathize with the crew, nor openly condemn the owners for their avarice, I endeavored to alleviate the situation by refusing to work the men except when work was a necessity.

When the accident happened which deprived us of our last gill of water, the captain was for standing until we could signal some vessel and secure a cask, but after we had talked the matter over he concluded, especially as the wind was fair, to run for Banjo Island. This is the southernmost island of the Andaman group, and no matter what the name on the maps and charts, it has been known as Banjo Island to all sailors for the last half century. At that time we did not know whether it was inhabited or not, but had reason to believe that we could procure fresh water there.

It was in the afternoon that we ran short of water. It was after nine o'clock next morning when we came to anchor in a small bay on the west side of Banjo Island, about half a mile from the shore. We fired off a musket half a dozen times, got two casks overboard, and then waited to see if the natives would not come out to us. The promise of three or four ship's spikes would have induced a score of natives to fill the casks. After an hour's waiting no one had appeared, and the captain concluded that the island was not inhabited. I was instructed to take the yawl and two men and tow one of the casks ashore and fill it. A careful survey of the beach with the ship's glass had located a spot where a fresh-water stream seemed to empty into the sea, and that was the point I was to make for. As the boat was lowered away the captain said:

"Mr. Jordan, I've heard that the natives in these parts are a bad lot. While this place seems to be clear of them, they may be lying in ambush to surprise you. You had best take a couple of muskets along for use in case you are attacked, and we'll throw some things into the boat for barter, if they are friendly and want to trade."

As I was busy getting the boat down and a line around one of the casks I did not notice what he put into the boat. On the way ashore I overhauled the stuff, however, and found half a dozen iron hoops, eight spikes, and a lot of trinkets. There was no fixed ammunition for the muskets, but some of the men had put in a tin box in which there were bullets, percussion caps, and powder—at least a couple of pounds of the last. It was a box brought from a locker in the cabin. I loaded the muskets on the way in, and had hardly finished when we were at the beach. As there was no surf, we ran the boat up on the sand to the right of a small rivulet, which cut its way through the beach to the sea. The glass had not deceived us. Here was fresh water, and here we could fill the cask without trouble. I set the men at this latter task, and stepped ashore. The island was heavily timbered, and the luxuriant growth of vines and creepers extended quite down to the narrow strip of land. There were parrots and other birds in plenty, and, carrying a

musket on my shoulder, I walked along the narrow beach for about a hundred yards, hoping to get a shot at game of some sort. After going about this distance I found an opening by which I could enter the forest. It seemed to be an old path. Had it been hard-beaten, or had there been signs that it had lately been traveled, I should have hesitated to advance. The two sailors were laughing and joking as they filled the cask, the woods echoing the notes of birds, and I had come to the conclusion that the island was uninhabited by man. I had entered the forest perhaps three hundred feet, and had my eyes on the watch ahead, when I felt a crash, everything turned dark, and the next thing I knew I opened my eyes to find half a dozen natives about me, while I was lying on the ground, bound hand and foot. I had been carried some distance while insensible, for I was now in a dell or glade.

I had received a blow on the head with a club, and my senses came back slowly. I had no more than fully comprehended what had occurred when the two sailors, with all the stuff from the boat, were brought in. The men had their hands tied behind their backs, and though neither had been hurt they were very much frightened. I now made a count of natives and it footed up twenty-seven. They were Malays, bred and born, and were armed with creeses, blow-guns, and spears. I had been knocked over without seeing a native. Later on they had stolen upon the sailors so quietly that their presence was unsuspected until they sprang out of the forest and made the men prisoners. If the incident had been observed from the brig, no outcry had been made by those on board. The men had just been brought up, when the leader of the Malays gave me a couple of kicks as a hint that we must be moving, and at the same time he cut the cords which bound my ankles and jerked me to my feet. I was still groggy from the effects of the blow, and my head swam as we pushed into the woods and hurried along as if the fellows expected pursuit. We did not go more than a couple of miles, however, before we came to a village, and that was the end of our journey. The place contained about thirty huts, which were occupied by the men who captured us. I saw about twenty women and children, but they were not allowed to come near us, and we were hustled into a hut almost as soon as we entered the town.

Then half a dozen men left the village, apparently as messengers, while those who remained gathered around a small fire in an open place directly in front of our hut. They had the box of powder, the muskets, and the trinkets, and they gestured and jabbered like so many women. They knew what firearms were, as was evinced by the way they handled them, and it was certain they were highly pleased with the trinkets.

I had received a cruel blow, which had given me a bad scalp wound and covered me with blood. My head throbbed and ached until I cared little what was going on, but the men were noting every movement of the natives, and after a bit one of them figured out the situation and said:

"Mr. Jordon, the fellows who went away on the run have gone to secure help. These chaps evidently think the brig is a trader, and loaded with muskets and trinkets, and as soon as reinforcements arrive they'll make an attempt to capture her."

The captain, cook, and three men and a boy were all the crew aboard, and I did not believe there was a single firm-arm left. A dozen natives could put off in our yawl and capture the brig without the loss of a man. There was a mat covering the doorway of our hut, but no guard outside. The whole crowd was so near that there was no need of a sentry. I was standing beside the men, looking through a crevice between the bamboos, when the natives drew closer together to examine something in the box. It might have been a bullet or a button. Whatever it was, their curiosity was highly excited, but they had scarcely got their heads together when there was a great flash and a s-w-i-s-h! followed by the discharge of the

two muskets. In my groggy state I shouldn't have known what had occurred until too late to take advantage of it, but the two men were quick-witted fellows, and the echoes of the muskets had not yet died away when one of them shouted:

"Now's our time! Out we go!"

Our hands were tied in front of us. The two men went out ahead of me, and I fell down as I cleared the hut. I was up in a couple of seconds, however, and as I pushed my way through the smoke I knew from the groans and screams that a number of the natives were badly injured. I suppose a round dozen of them were burned by the powder, and perhaps one or two of them were killed or wounded by the muskets. I was no sooner clear of the cloud than I was also clear of the village, and as I ran for our boat I tugged at my bonds and loosened them. In a minute or two I had my hands free, and as I crashed through the woods I overtook one of the sailors. His wrists were tied with a bark rope, and I had it clear in half a minute. The other man we neither saw nor heard. The natives were still yelling and whooping, and we had a start of two or three minutes. Sailors are not supposed to be good runners, but the way the pair of us tore through the woods would have done credit to professional runners. We struck the beach within 200 feet of the yawl, which lay as we had left her, with nothing gone but the muskets and trinkets, and in two minutes more we were afloat. We had a close shave of it on both sides of us. The captain had suspected what was up, and had weighed anchor, and was making sail as we heaved the boat into the water. We were not 200 feet from shore when six natives appeared on the sands. Fortunately for us, they had taken up the pursuit in such haste that they were not armed, and they could only gesture and yell as we pulled away for the brig. The other sailor must have taken a contrary direction, and was, no doubt, soon captured and killed.

THE BOSS.

"He'd be a good man to work fer if he got the right kind o' boy," said Jimmy. "What he wants is a boy about sixty years old with a bay window on him an' a bald head. If some old lobster like he is would come in an' take my seat an' stand off the buys he doesn't want to see an' run his errands fer him he'd be suited—nit-not."

"He jest thinks that he's all right, that's all," continued Jimmy. "If he had a duplerkit of hisself around he'd let out a holler you could hear clear out to the city limits. He comes in an' he says to me, 'What are you a-doin' that fer, you young limb? You don't never see me a-doin' that.' Well, I should say not! I'd like to see him a-balancin' a feather duster on his nose an' jugglin' a couple o' rubber stamps at the same time. An' whistle! He couldn't carry a tune to save his derved old red neck."

"I've got a pitcher o' myself havin' my nails manicured by that fairy up on the tenth floor an' makin' goo-goo eyes at her, the old skate! 'Why don't you ever get your hands washed, blame it!' he says. 'Look at them finger marks on these here papers!' I wanted to say, 'If I didn't never have nothin' more to do with my hands 'ceptin' to stroke my whiskers an' sign checks mebbe I'd keep my hands clean, too, you old mutt. If I snook up to the tenth floor as much as you do I'd have pretty finger nails. I would if I could, but I can't, 'cause I'm married now, doncher see?' That's what I want to say to him. He doesn't know that I'm on to him, but you bet I am."

"I takes a message over to West Adams for him this mornin' an' because I didn't git back with the answer in ten minutes he throws a fit. 'What'n blazes have you been a-doin' "

with the afternoon?' he says. Did he roast me? Well, say! I'd a notion to take him on the side o' the head with an ink bottle. He's an old peach to talk about wastin' time. I don't go out to my lunch an' say I'll be back in ten minutes and stay gone two hours an' a half, anyway. An' when I come back from my lunch my face ain't no redder nor my talk any thicker than it was afore I went out. He ought to git on the water wagon."

"I've gotter be respectful an' attentive an' perlite, an' I've gotter use nice langwitch. I s'pose he thinks it was nice langwitch he was usin' when that book agent got in to see him the other mornin'. I bet if I talked like that they'd send me to the reform school, but it's all right for him. Then he blames it on to me, an' he gives me a nice perlite goin' over. 'What did you let him in for, you little idiot?' he says. 'What am I payin' you wages fer? Do you think you're an ornymont to the orfis?' I won't say what else he said. I says: 'He didn't have no book agent sign on him,' I says, 'an' I didn't have time ter telephone fer the perlice before he broke in,' I says. 'I thought he was a frien' o' yours, the way he acted.'"

"Then he calls me a few more pet names an' goes back growlin'. He pays me big wages, he does. He'll bust hisself payin' me wages. As far as bein' an ornymont goes, I s'pose he thinks he's a hot old decoration, with his bottle nose an' his handy legs. Oh, yes, he's a nice man to work fer. Sure!"

"On'y I ought to be one o' these nice little kids with frills on the end o' my pants like them I seen in a book my teacher give me wunst. Then everybody what come in the orfis 'ud pat me on my curls an' slip me a ten-spot, an' his nibs 'ud give me an intrust in the business. It's all my fault."

"Sure he's a nice man," said Jimmy with bitter sarcasm. "He's an old peach."

It is a curious fact that the Government of the United States maintains and provides for numerous cats. The army has its regular corps of them, kept at the commissary depots of the great cities, and each draws regular pay equal to eighteen dollars and twenty-five cents a year. It is customary for the officer in charge of each depot to submit to the War Department a request for an allowance for so many cats, and the regulations provide that meat shall be purchased for them at a price not greater than five cents a pound, to which a stated quantity of canned milk is added for variety. Experiment has shown that no matter how excellent a hunter a cat may be, nor how abundant the mice, no cat will thrive properly on a diet of the unmitigated mouse; nor does it neglect its duties when other food is provided. Bids for the cats' meat are regularly posted, calling for "fresh beef suitable for feeding cats, bone to be excluded, to be delivered at the contractor's place of business on such days as may be designated, and in such quantities as may be required." More than four hundred cats are in the employ of the Post-Office Department, distributed among about fifty of the largest offices. The New York city office expends some sixty dollars annually in cats' meat. Most of the other large Government buildings are supplied with cats. At the immense cold-storage depot established a year or so ago at Manila, cats were found to be necessary, and so tabbies were sent from the famous cold storage breed of Pittsburgh. This breed originated in the great warehouses of a cold storage company, and has developed special qualifications for enduring extreme cold. The cold-storage cats are short-tailed, chubby, with long and heavy fur, and their eyebrows and whiskers are extraordinarily long and strong. It is said that they do not thrive when transferred to an ordinary temperature.

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